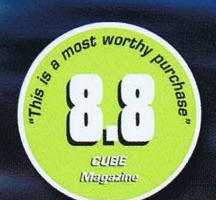

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LA STORY

Like a metaphorical hurricane of games, more games and many large, sweaty Americans, another E3 has come and gone, and for three hot, moist days in downtown LA, Nintendo displayed their wares for the year ahead. And while short of real surprises – no new *Mario*? No sequel to *The Wind Waker*? – it was a strong showing for the Kyoto giant, with such big names as *Mario Kart*, *F-Zero* and even *Metal Gear Solid* lending their support to the Gamecube, and causing juddering paroxysms of delight in all who met their beatific gaze. And the sheer amount of games showcased for the Cube was staggering; check out our plentiful coverage starting on page 6 (plus our US correspondent Thomas Wilde's E3 diary on page 26) and be prepared to salivate like a giant starving dachshund at the goodies on offer. Yum.

KITTS-MAN

Martin is a man of diminished morals and withered social responsibility. Possibly this is why he enjoyed *Hitman 2* so much – but take away the hideous violence from the game and you're left with something so gloriously free-form and given to letting players do things their own way, that it could have come from Nintendo themselves (if Nintendo suddenly turned into, say, Rockstar). It requires a bit of patience to play, but regardless of subject matter, it's a brilliant game indeed and worthy of a place in your collection.

ITB 2.0

I'm The Best is changing. From next month it will be a fruity new melange of hardcore challenges and high-score tables, operating off an intriguing new points-based system – and the more points you get, the better you'll rate. It's going to be great - so get practising now. Enjoy!

Jes Bickham
Editor
ngc@futurenet.co.uk



TURN TO PAGE 6
For our exhaustive E3 coverage. Exhaustive!

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MEET ENJiKi
It's amazing what a rubber crop-top, purple knickers and a pair of tights will do. It wasn't that long ago that Dan found her scrubbing grape-stains out of a geriatric vintner's long-johns – and now look at her. A cheap attempt by childish journalists to inject some much-needed sex apper… did we say that out loud…? Ahem.
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ALL THE BEST GAMES REVEALED!
Over 20 pages of unmissable coverage from this year's E3. All the games, all the gossip, and all the biggest news from the show floor!

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When wrestling and hip-hop collide. It's actually quite good too.

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More in-depth walkthroughs and secrets for Nintendo's finest.

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We go back to Ninty's multiplayer masterworks to rediscover the forgotten joys of powersliding.

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NGC AT E3

The best bits from the only games trade show that matters…



May time was E3 time – the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, where the worldwide videogames industry gathers to exchange business cards and go to expensive parties. Oh, and demo the most important new titles due for release over the next 12 months.

NGC's roving reporters were there, sitting perkily in the front row at press conferences, chatting to important-looking people (such as police officers), and enthusiastically test-driving the latest Gamecube goodies.

We marvelled at *Mario Kart*, had fun with *Final Fantasy* and, erm, stalked *Starfox* to within an inch of its life. We squeezed to the front of every heaving queue, sinking into fat Americans and trampling small, helpless children in our single-minded pursuit of the only thing that matters – Nintendo gaming.

Splashed across the next dozen or so pages, you'll find our impressions on the best of E3, the latest screenshots, and all the games we're going to be biting our nails and saving our pennies for over the coming year.



△ You couldn't hide people in lockers in the original game. It's an *MGS 2* thing.



△ Snake chuckles insanely as he targets a man's vitals using his laser sight.



△ Dangling off ledges and sneaking below guards. Another *MGS 2* thing.



△ If hide-and-seek is your thing, *MGS* is your game.

MGS TWIN SNAKES

The original stealth master prepares for a Gamecube remix.



Developed by *Eternal Darkness* coders Silicon Knights, this Gamecube-exclusive *Metal Gear* isn't an entirely new game. Instead, it's a sort of *MGS* version 1.1, consisting of much of the original PlayStation title, with some of the new gameplay mechanics of the PS2 sequel.

Additional areas and challenges are promised, so it's probably about as significant an update as *Resident Evil* was, and some sort of GBA connectivity has been confirmed by Nintendo as well (possibly a radar, or for receiving Codec messages). The textures look a bit low-res, though. We'll have more on this one in the coming months, as it's scheduled for release before the end of the year.



△ Right at the start of the game, having swum through freezing water to infiltrate the enemy base. Excellent work, Mr Snake.

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

An extra portion of kart! Lunchtimes will never be the same again…



Thankfully Nintendo's biggest E3 game didn't disappoint. *Mario Kart*'s major innovation is the addition of two characters to each kart – the driver can keep hold of items, while the passenger uses weapons or steals power-ups from other racers. Switching between them is seamless, and adds a spot of strategy to the game. Each character also has a special weapon only he, she or it can collect from item boxes. Irritatingly, there's no N64-style corner-turbo, and the handling seems dependent on the kart type rather than the driver. It's a little slow at the moment but is silky-smooth, supports up to eight players (by linking multiple Gamecubes via broadband adaptors), and is out here in November.



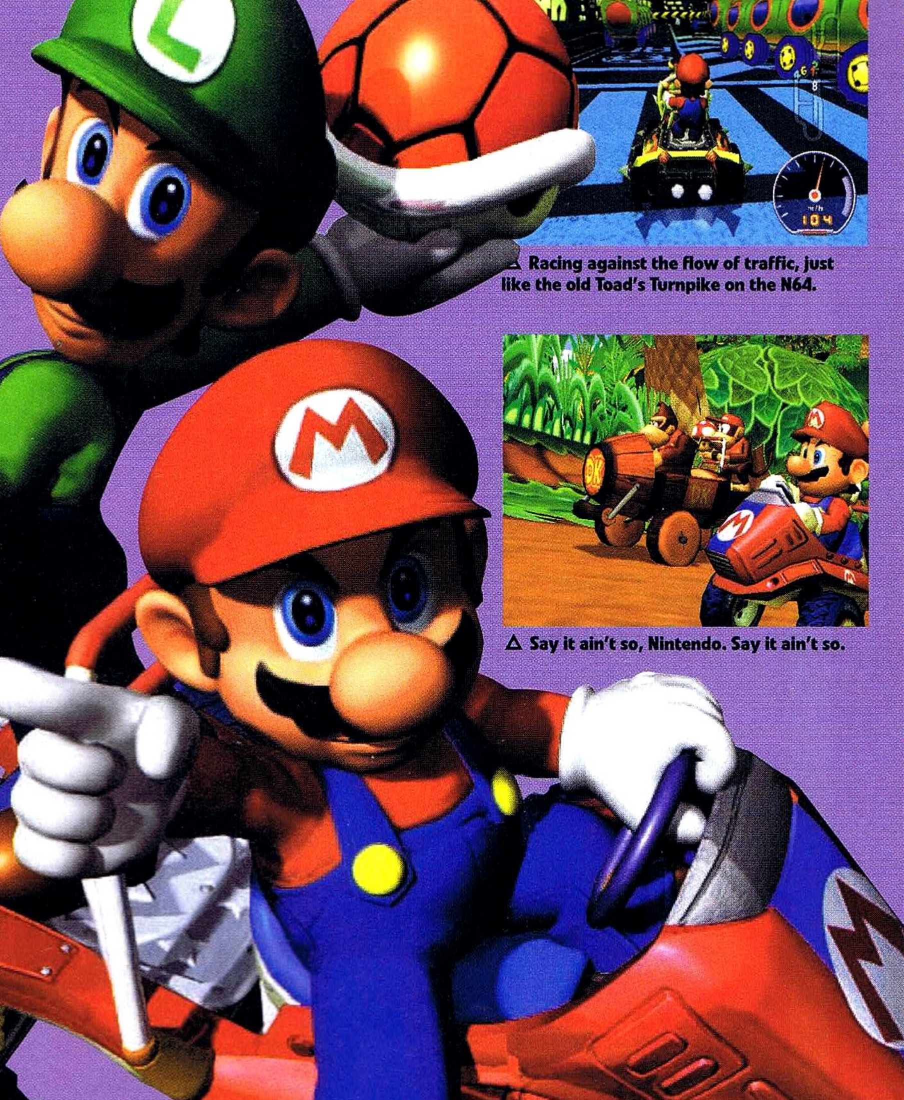
△ Characters at the back of the karts interact automatically when they pass.



△ This Gelato Beach course features those things that flip you way up into the air.



△ Luigi's pansymobile – along with Diddy Kong, a worrying sign of wrongness.



△ Racing against the flow of traffic, just like the old Toad's Turnpike on the N64.

△ Say it ain't so, Nintendo. Say it ain't so.



△ You just know it's going to be the business with four players, right? Imagine it with eight players, on two Gamecubes. Or even eight Gamecubes, if you're extremely rich.

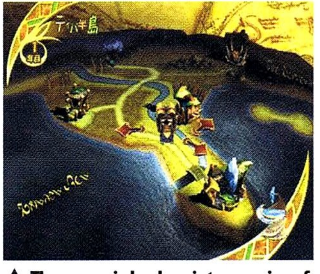


△ Mario in the process of nicking something. Absolutely typical.



△ You'll notice a few more hills and banked turns than in previous games.


△ Huge monsters are one of the game's standout features.


△ The game is broken into a series of levels which are accessed from here.

△ Each location is stunning in its detail and design. Simply gorgeous.


△ The game isn't as plot-driven as usual, with more emphasis on action.


△ Co-operation is vital as you struggle to fight and protect your team.



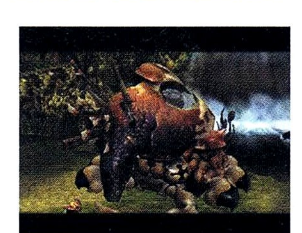
FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

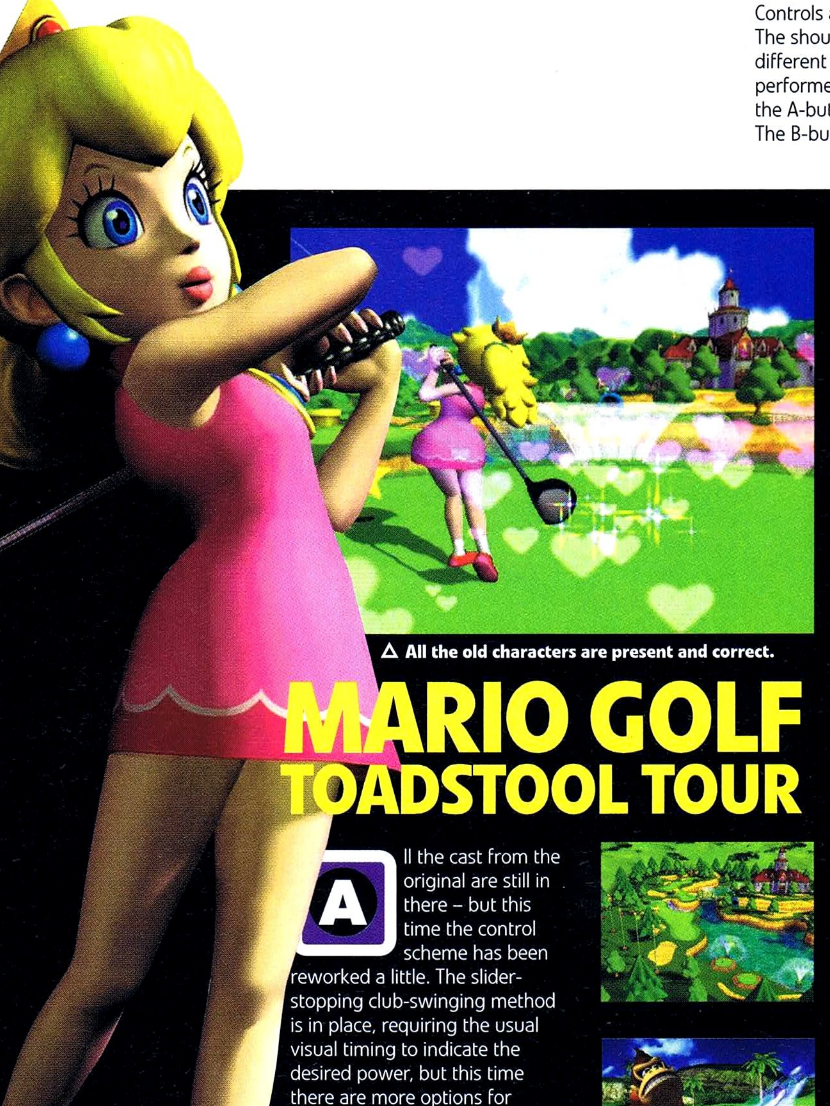
Stat's entertainment! Co-op adventuring draws near…


GBA connectivity is not essential for the single *Crystal Chronicles* player, but extra players *will* need one each to join in. Controls are otherwise simple. The shoulder buttons access different actions that can be performed in real time, while the A-button activates them. The B-button can be used to pick up objects, some of which alter your characters' abilities. And that's about it – dead easy!

In four-player games, all characters occupy the same screen space – this closeness is important, as you have to protect a character who carries a crystal which keeps a dangerous fog at bay. Hmm…

Broken down into a series of levels (accessed from an overworld map), *FF:CC* will be more action-orientated (in a *PSO* kind of way), rather than one long, vast adventure driven by menus and statistics. Hurrah!


△ As yet, we have no idea how long the final adventure will last.


△ All the old characters are present and correct.

MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR

All the cast from the original are still in there – but this time the control scheme has been reworked a little. The slider-stopping club-swinging method is in place, requiring the usual visual timing to indicate the desired power, but this time there are more options for applying spin – made available by hitting button-combos before the ball is actually struck. Looks rather promising.



△ It's now much smoother, with more detail around the course periphery. Smashing.


△ The Gamecube allows for more complex structures to test your skills on.


△ Snow FX are vastly improved, as you carve your way down the mountain side.

1080° AVALANCHE


Another title that's undergone a great deal of change, and indeed improvement, since we saw it last. *1080°* is looking much slicker. Much on-screen clutter, such as that stupid trick-indicating colour-wheel, has been ditched, and the game looks much purer for it. It's also been spruced up visually, with better snow effects and more detail on the surroundings. If they can bring the controls in line with the original, this should be ace.



△ Arwing craft can now air-brake to a standstill, which will help improve your aim.

STARFOX 2

Namco show off a multiplayer dogfighter to die for. Foxy!

It's great to finally see this *Lylat Wars* follow-up in action. Despite being a long way from what we expected, the change to a more multiplayer-oriented experience is welcome, nonetheless. The game concentrates primarily on multiplayer action, either in competition or co-operatively. Players, taking control of Fox, Slippy, Falco and co, can wander around the 'arenas' in third-person mode, or take control of a Landmaster-style tank, and the obligatory Arwing.

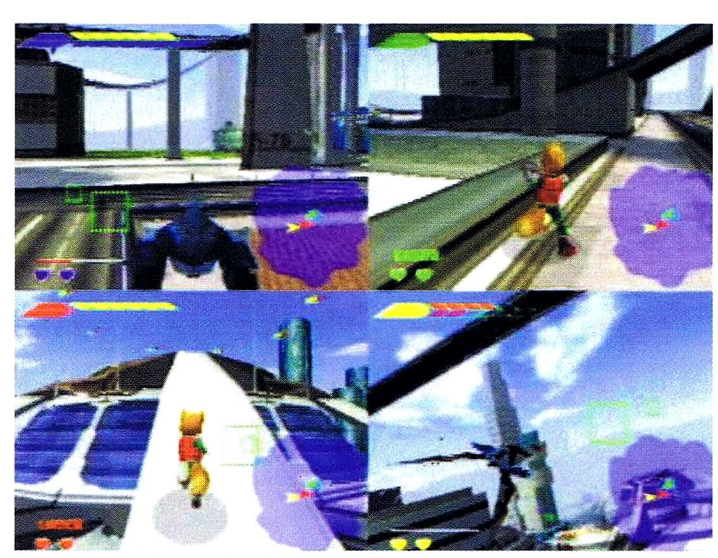
So far, the vehicles – especially the Landmaster – are distinctly lacking in texture, so the game has a rather functional appearance at the moment, but the smoothness of the action and frantic air-to-air and ground-to-air battling is more than enough to get us well and truly excited.



△ You can either take command of vehicles, or fight your way on foot.



△ Even Krystal makes an appearance. Which is a shame, as she's rubbish.



△ Your standard weapon is rather pathetic, so hunting down power-ups is a priority.



△ The requisite multiplayer is already in, and looking nice and smooth to boot.



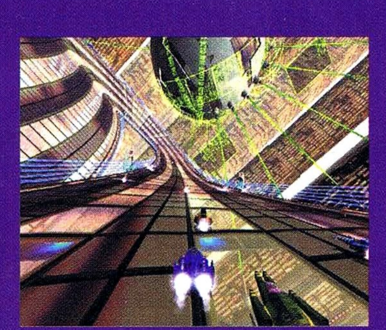
△ When floating around in ghost form you can possess people, *Messiah*-style.

GEIST

Developed by n-Space, published by Nintendo, this is a long way from being finished. *Geist* is certainly an intriguing concept. You take control of a 'spectral operative' (in other words, a ghost), and can possess the game's creatures, be it human, dog or, um, mouse, to influence the goings-on in, from what we've seen so far, some kind of military-style base…



△ Most of the environments we've seen are of the generic-military-base variety.



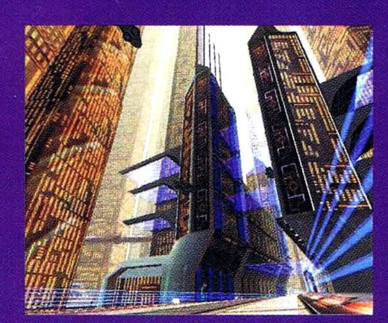
△ This track really impressed us, with its banked turns and harsh right-angled bends.



△ It's so fast it's insane. Making your first go quite tricky to begin with.



△ Expect all the future-racing trimmings, like these over-the-top neon signs.



△ The setting for each track is jaw-dropping. It's a shame there aren't more.

F-ZERO GX



GX', as it's now known as, just looks better and better. The amazingly fast high-speed future racer is looking sharp, stylish and incredibly well designed, with the kind of polish you'll have come to expect from Sega. The icing on the cake, however, is the ability to customise your craft on the console version, stick it on a memory card, and then battle it out on the arcade version. Should the feature make it over here, of course.

DID YOU KNOW? *Starfox 2* actually first appeared on the SNES, in never-released form. There are ROMs of it floating around the internet. Not that we're suggesting you go and download them or anything. That's naughty.



△ We simply can't remember the name of this whale-thing.



△ Partake in two-player tag-team battles, just like momma, um, did.

POKÉMON COLOSSEUM

Yeah, it's a Gamecube *Pokémon Stadium*, basically. Nice, y'know, but not earth-shattering news. Still, the N64 *Stadiums* were entertaining enough, and the tag-team feature of *Ruby* and *Sapphire* will be translated for four-player Cube fun, which should add a whole new dimension to Pokémon battling. Yipper.

POKÉMON CHANNEL

This looks like a riff on *Hey You, Pikachu*, but without the voice-recognition software. Explore the Pokémon world and retrieve pieces of a Pokémon TV programme. Odd. Looks like one for the kids. Or perhaps Dan, who operates at a similar level.



△ Ah, Pikachu. At least he's no longer wetting himself. Dirty rat.



△ See Squirtle dance! He's a camp little beastie, and no mistake.



△ Ah, the old climb-the-beanstalk game. We bet you've got to jump up the leaves.



△ Evil monkeys fling faeces and half-eaten rotten meat down on our valiant heroes.



△ Penguins. Penguins everywhere! It's like some kind of nightmare involving... penguins.



△ We'd suggest there's a Chomp hiding under a bucket here. Call us crazy, but there y'go.

MARIO PARTY 5

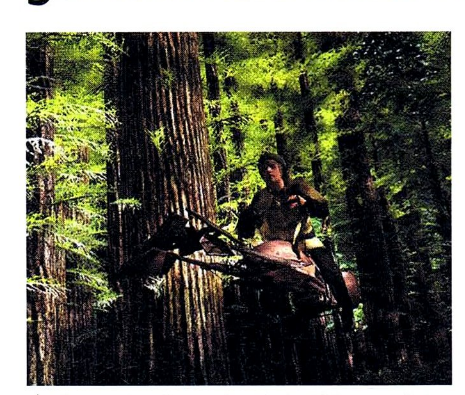
There ain't no party like a – (*snip! – Ed*)



After the disappointing *Mario Party 4*, and its nasty symmetrical boards, we're hoping this will be a return to the relative greatness of *Mario Party 2*. There are 60 new minigames, so we've got our arthritic digits crossed – to the sound of much cracking – that the game will avoid duplication of old ones from previous games. Also, the boards will offer lovely 3D-ness, rather than the isometric 2D-ness of previous incarnations. It's not going to sell a pile of Gamecubes, but *Mario Party 5* nonetheless looks 'hella fun' (cough).

ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE

This could possibly be the best-looking game on the Cube. Fact!



△ The Speeder Bike section feels a little 'on-rails' but is exhilaratingly fast. Nice trees, too. Yes.



Brilliantly sharp and smooth, and even more detailed than *Rogue Leader* (there's *loads* more going on, and literally hundreds of TIES flying around), *Rebel Strike* may be more-of-the-same-but-different (*snappy – Ed*), but it's looking incredible. The gimmick this time around is the ability to hop out of the vehicle you're in, and run on foot to another – including scabby Tauntauns, lanky AT-STs and whip-fast Speeder Bikes, as the game offers some crowd-pleasing visits to Endor and Hoth (again). Underneath the 'hood', the game's just as simple as its predecessor, avoiding more complex sim-style handling, but given the frenetic excitement on offer, that's no bad thing at all. Especially when you can slice the guts out of an AT-AT with your Lightsaber.

There's also a four-player deathmatch multiplayer mode, and astonishingly, *Rogue Leader* is included in its entirety as a silky-smooth two-player co-operative game, which is brilliantly generous.



△ Grab an AT-ST and hunt Stormtroopers. You can also command Ewoks via the D-pad...





△ Ooh, asteroids. The third-person sections (right) look somewhat basic and repetitive.

DID YOU KNOW? The asteroid level in *Rogue Squadron III* is the same one by Geonosis in Attack of the Clones, where Jango fought Obi-Wan Kenobi.








△ Kirby. Hideous pink blob that he is.

△ A strange top-down view. Hmm.

KIRBY'S AIR RIDE


It's a great idea – A *Mario Kart*-style Kirby game, complete with trademark enemy-inhalation – but the strange controls make this much more frustrating than it should be. You're always moving forwards, and braking builds up a boost meter, making steep hills tricky, as you need to boost to get up them, but it also sees you fall back down the other way as you slow down. Hmm. Not great with *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* coming…









△ Robots! You see – Gosen's mechanical revolution is beginning! We're doomed!

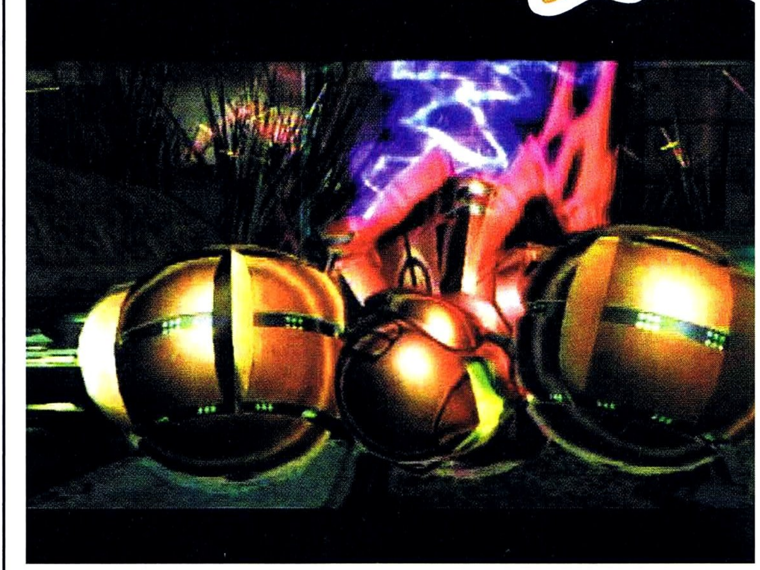
△ It's very simple but plenty of fun – just like the N64 games, but with four players.

CUSTOM ROBO


Hurrah! The two N64 *Custom Robo* games were ace, but only came out in Japan. Given the non-appearance of *Animal Crossing*, we're sceptical about this reaching European shores, but it would be a shame if it doesn't. Up to four players can choose their own bots and equip them as they see fit from a huge cache of weaponry and equipment, to create a truly individual battle-droid. The customisation is arguably more absorbing than the battles themselves, but it's great fun nonetheless.







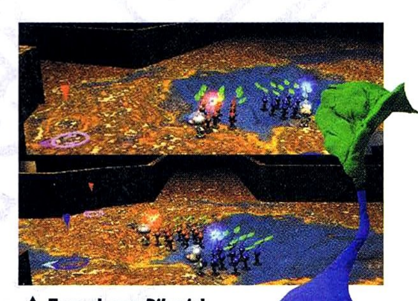
△ Good grief. This really is not the time to be taking a nap. Darn bounty hunters. Tsk.

METROID PRIME 2

Annoyingly present in video form only, *Metroid Prime 2* still got tongues wagging due to the footage – Samus being strangled by a red alien. More Space Pirate action or a whole new enemy? We'll know more soon. If we don't, we'll explode. Let's hope it's not in development for years…



△ Geraint eats so much crap he'll end up looking like this by the time he hits 30.



△ Two player *Pikmin*! Hurrah! This will be ace…

PIKMIN 2

Our vegetable chums return.


This looks like fixing everything that was wrong with the otherwise delightful *Pikmin*. There's no time limit, for a start, and some randomly-generated areas make for a more replayable experience. But it's the addition of new Pikmin (purple and white, whose abilities are as-yet untold), over 60 types of enemy beasties, and a second playable character that make a real difference to the gameplay. The lone player can alternate between Olimar and his sidekick, or two players can play co-operatively, and it's all as gloriously smooth as could be. And graphically, this sequel is better than ever, with richer environments incorporating dynamic shadows, flora that changes throughout the day, and more. Of course, if your tastes don't run to cutesy resource management, then you may yet remain unmoved by *Pikmin 2*'s charms – but this is hugely entertaining stuff, and shouldn't be ignored. Apparently, it'll be out over here before Christmas too, which is great news indeed.

"It's a strategy wargame, much like *FF Tactics*"



△ Transparent foreground graphics. Ooh!



△ Brand-new artwork for the cut-scenes.



△ Hands off my Morph Ball, alien scum!



METROID ZERO MISSION

Back to the source with the original *Metroid*.



Did you unlock the original NES version in *Metroid Prime*? Well, if you ever wished you could take it with you to play on your GBA, here's your chance. *Metroid Zero Mission* is yet another graphically enhanced version of a very old game, this time adding *Metroid Fusion* graphics to the vintage NES *Metroid*. It wasn't actually playable at the show, and was displayed only as rolling video footage on one of Nintendo's demo pods. But from what we can gather, little has changed other than the colourful new look. Awesome, dudes.





△ Recognise this from that *Metroid Prime* bonus game?



△ Heads rolled at Nintendo's ad dept when the last boss of *Fusion* was revealed in a TV commercial. Nice fact for you.





△ Lurid dayglo colours are the order of the day here.



△ Fight scenes are presented in this cutaway view, to show off those special effects.



△ Arrange your battle units on a tactical map filled with wandering enemy forces.



△ As in previous games in the series, the character artwork is excellent.

△ We don't recognise this Riso person. Where are Marth and Roy from *Smash Bros*?

FIRE EMBLEM



Most westerners won't have encountered the *Fire Emblem* games in the past. They're huge in Japan (where the series runs to more than ten titles on NES, SNES and Game Boy) but completely ignored everywhere else, which is why it comes as a surprise to find this one tentatively scheduled for a UK release in early 2004. It's a strategy wargame, much like *FF Tactics*, with squads to control and levels to rise through. The English translation isn't currently in place, and it wouldn't be a major shock to see this one sell millions in Japan, then shuffle off the release schedule over here. Could be interesting though.



△ The raccoon suit makes Mario fly. There's some great stuff in this game.



△ What would you give for a proper new 2D Mario game? Maybe one day.

MARIO ADVANCE 4

It's *Super Mario Bros 3* – the SNES *Mario All Stars* version. A nice conversion, with support for the e-Reader gadget (for unlocking new levels) and exactly the same multiplayer mode as all the other *Mario Advance* games. It remains the most successful game of all time, and is sure to pick up some new fans when it's released later this year.

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

The SNES classic returns. Or, more accurately, the GBC version of the SNES classic, with spruced-up graphics, unlockable artwork galleries, and a couple of extra minigames. Not quite as pretty as the SNES original, but still nice. Should be out now, in fact.



△ Munting minecarts! Diddy takes a spin in traditional monkey style.



△ Brings the memories flooding back. Now can we have some *new* games?



E3 2003

"There are new COs and extra rules to contend with"



Δ Luckily for cowards, there's plenty of stuff to talk about between fight scenes.



Δ Learn your battle skills on the frozen fields of the snowball arena.

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS

Square's take on the *Ogre Battle* format is a wargame/RPG hybrid, in which you control a squad of warriors made up of various races. The English translation revealed countless roles and power-ups for the soldiers, and a vast series of menus for assigning them to each species. We'll see in September if it'll give *Advance Wars* a run for its money.



Δ The combat system is simple enough to learn, and has a huge amount of configurable stuff for experts to toy with.



Δ It's all gone a bit *Donkey Kong Country* (except *DKC* didn't have random monster encounters to deal with).

Δ Small kids versus large animals. It's the spectator sport of the future.

Δ In the land of the giant flowers, where the Raymen and Globoxes dwell.

SWORD OF MANA



Billed as a prequel to the *Mana* series, Square's Nintendo-published RPG looked good at E3. Although we didn't have time to play very much of the demo version, the graphics were appreciably better than *Secret of Mana* for the SNES, and the real-time combat system, with its 'ring commands', worked a treat. The story may be familiar to players of the *Final Fantasy Adventures* titles, but you won't have seen it looking this good. No firm release date, mind.

ADVANCE WARS 2 BLACK HOLE RISING

Finished the original? Your next fix of turn-based strategy action is just a couple of months away.

The sequel to the GBA's best game was on display in fully finished form – it's released in the US later this month, and over here in October. As you probably expected, the designers haven't messed around with the original game's winning formula, but it's definitely more than just a bunch of extra missions. There are some new COs with new powers, and extra rules to contend with. It's now possible to capture missile sites and lay waste to huge areas of land, and there's a special unit called the Neo Tank, which has a poor field of vision and very high combat statistics. You can play a campaign as the good guys or the forces of evil, depending on which CO you choose. The original War Room maps are included, so you can test how the new stuff affects the tactical play on a familiar level. We didn't get to try the link-up mode to see if the other players can do something other than twiddle their thumbs while waiting for their next turn, but apart from that, *Advance Wars 2* is ready to eat your batteries and ruin your sleep patterns very soon now.



Δ The same map size and types of terrain as you got in the original editing mode.



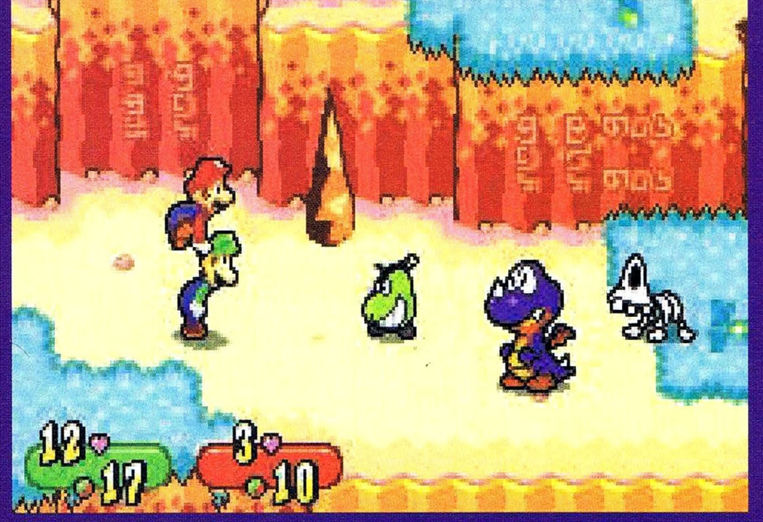
Δ Take command of the rocket base to bring an end to this particular level.



Δ This is the Design-a-CO mode. You just get to give them a new colour tint.



Δ Look at this monster. It costs a fortune to buy, but will make short work of anything it runs into.



Dreaming of a follow-up to *Paper Mario*? Here it is, on the humble GBA.


Combine the abilities of the inseparable brothers to cure Peach's affliction.


A skipping game. Press A to make Mario jump, B to make Luigi jump.

MARIO & LUIGI


ere's a contender for the best storyline ever – an evil witch has stolen Peach's power of speech and replaced it with… explosives. Not wishing to get blasted every time the royal gob asks them to clean out her solid waste pipe, our plumbing brothers team up in a semi-sequel to *Paper Mario*. RPG fights and dual-bro platform controls are the order of the day in this highly promising title.


Running around a darkened area on the GBA. There's loads to explore.


Other players pop up on your GBA if they enter the same room as you.


On the main Gamecube screen, it's all about fighting and co-operation.


Apart from some new effects, it looks much the same on GBA and Gamecube.

ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS


layed the brilliant four-player mode in GBA *Zelda*? Then you're one of the lucky few. The need for four carts made this a disappointingly obscure bonus feature, but now it's been reworked and expanded on Gamecube, so everyone can play. Real GBAs must be used to control it, giving a private screen for each player. An overworld is shown on the TV screen, and when one player pops into a house or cave, the action switches to the GBA, leaving everyone else free to explore at will. Arguably the best multiplayer game on show at E3.




POKÉMON PINBALL

This Ruby/Sapphire-themed follow-up to the superb GBC game offers more of the same, minus the rumble cart. But you can get rumble by playing it on the Gamecube's GB Player. Summer for the US, November for us.




MARIO & DONKEY KONG

A combination of the classic *Donkey Kong* and the puzzle fun of *Lemmings*, is perhaps the best way to describe this DK compilation/update. Guide Baby Mario through DK's maze, using full-size Mazza to clear the way.




Just like the Treasure Hunt TV show, except without helicopters or lycra.


Tetra keeps track of the scores on the Gamecube's display.

ZELDA TETRA'S TRACKERS

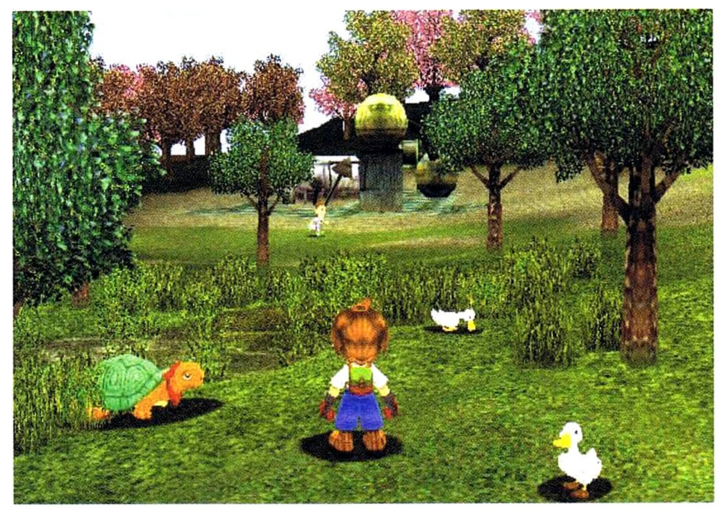

nother piece of high connectivity between GBA and Gamecube, although we reckon it should be bundled with *Four Swords*, not sold separately. It's like *Four Swords* turned into a treasure hunt. You compete to collect stamps from Tetra's pirate buddies, with the GBA screen showing personal messages and hints. With any luck Nintendo will include some free GBA link cables with this, otherwise it'll be expensive to play.

HARVEST MOON

Farming. Growing turnips and flowers, courting the young lasses from the local village, and selling your wares at fetes. It's a premise which has spawned loving fans the world over and the sedate pacing and undeniably cute charm of this series continues – which in our book, is the best news we've heard in ages. Well done to Ubi Soft for having the balls to publish it over here.



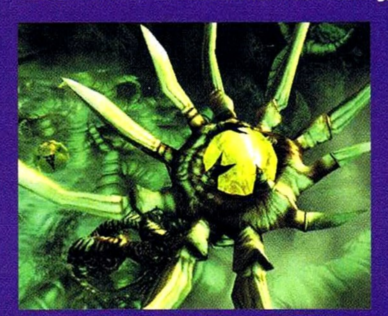
Δ Horse riding will be a splendid addition.



Δ The game's textures are a little low-res – but then, we couldn't really care less.



Δ The world will be somewhat free-roaming, but game progression will be fairly linear.



Δ It's beautifully designed, so it is.



Δ The pig in the top corner is a sidekick.

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL



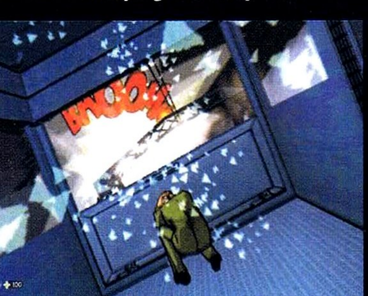
It's been a year since we saw this and it's really come on strong. A mix of genres which include hovercraft racing, *Pokémon Snap* elements (where you can take pictures of the local wildlife), fighting and free-roaming puzzling wrapped up with sumptuous visuals and high production values from the guy who brought us *Rayman*, make this a potential winner.



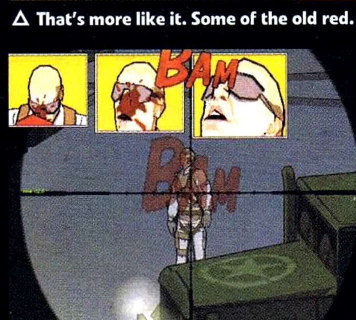
Δ The comic stylings are nicely done.



Δ That's more like it. Some of the old red.



Δ All cut-scenes use the in-game engine.



Δ Those little frames show the entry point.



XIII



This looks fantastic, with a visual style that's been explored brilliantly, and plenty of innovative comic-book touches. There are plenty of objects and gadgets to interact with and a superb story – one to look forward to.



PRINCE OF PERSIA



Δ The environments are all very atmospheric.

Prince of Persia is stunning. The original brought character animation out of the dark ages and this looks set to evolve it even further. Beautifully pure controls, soft, dynamic lighting (which puts even *Splinter Cell* to shame), some cracking effects, including rippling pools of water, and smooth, intuitive combat to die for.

We weren't really sure how this was going to turn out, but since E3 we've come away very impressed. If we were betting men we'd say this is going to be huge.



Δ The combat is all well implemented and – more to the point – nice and intuitive.


WARNING:
LASTS LONGER THAN EXPECTED
Panasonic
POWER MAX 3
ALKALINE
www.panasonic-batteries.com


Δ The likeness is certainly much better this time.


Δ Those flame effects are looking good too.

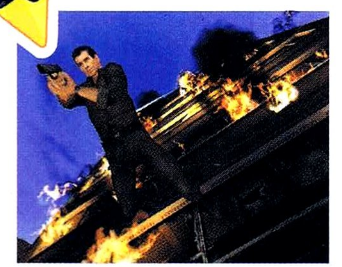

Δ The third-person view will make camp, Bond-style fisticuffs possible.

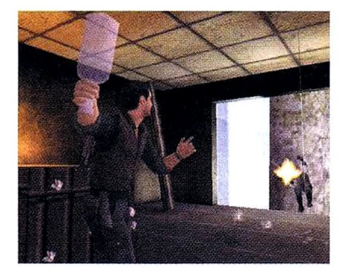
JAMES BOND
EVERYTHING OR NOTHING
EA are just taking the Pierce now…


Taking a break from the usual FPS mould comes EA's latest Bond adventure – this time in third-person-o-vision with the full likeness of one Pierce Brosnan. Not a bad move in our book as the change has opened up new levels of freedom for a series that, frankly, was going a bit stale.

Levels will be a little more free-form, with players being able to choose how they finish the mission, rather than being forced down a predetermined path. Interaction with the surrounding environment has also been upped significantly – Bond can now pick up bottles, chairs and the like and smash them over adversaries' heads.

The game will also feature seamless transitions, as Bond gets into and out of various vehicles. He can also rappel down walls – an addition which will hopefully promote more exploration. So far so good.




Δ No doubt the game will jump on the stealth bandwagon too. Still, anything's got to be better than *Agent Under Fire* or *Nightfire*…


Δ The games have done a decent enough job of capturing the film's atmosphere so far…

LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING

Guide bald Ewoks on a quest to throw their 'ring' into the 'Crack of Doom'. Seamless movie-to-game transitions will tie proceedings as closely to the film as possible. You engage in close and ranged combat, hacking and slashing your way through the film's locales. There are eight selectable characters, each with their own path through the game. Also included is a new co-operative mode that will allow you to smack orcs up with a willing friend.


Δ We rather enjoyed *2003*. Here's hoping they can perfect it this time…

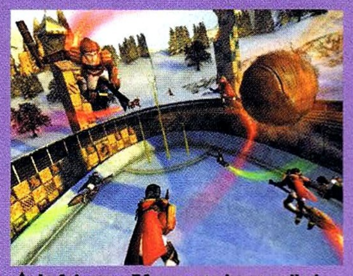

Δ …by adding third-division stragglers Swansea City to the team roster!

FIFA 2004

At a guess, we'd say this involves about 22 'players' on a 'pitch'. You get them to run up and down over 90 virtual minutes, tonking a 'ball' into 'goals' on either end of the field. More of the same, but after the much-improved 2003 version, this should be an update worth looking forward to. For once. Here's hoping they can do something more imaginative with the spectators.

HARRY POTTER QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

Based on the 'sport' from the books. If you've not read them or simply couldn't care less for The Potterer, the game involves you flying around on a broomstick attempting to throw a ball through a load of hoops. In theory, it could make for an entertaining game.


Δ In fairness, EA seem to have pulled their socks up this year. At least…


Δ …insofar as their output hasn't been *completely* despicable. Nice pass!


Richard Harris: surely too dead to be playing Gridiron.

MADDEN NFL 2004


We see a pattern emerging here. All we need now is *NHL 2004*.

NBA LIVE 2004


Doh! There you go. All our favourite US sports in one banner.

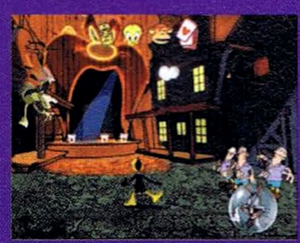
NHL 2004


This would be far more interesting if it had guns and deer.

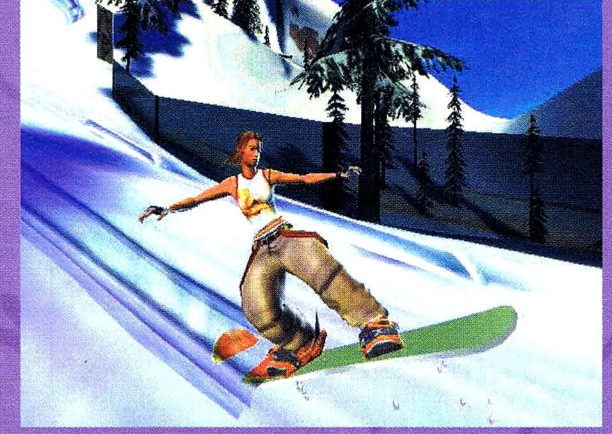
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004


Why? If you're really that Lego-obsessed just buy the plastic ones.

BIONICLE


Look at it. Odds-on favourite to score NGC's first-ever 99 per cent!

LOONEY TUNES BACK IN ACTION


It's nice, but compared to *1080°*, we know which we'd rather play.


It's got a new 'unlimited combo' system, apparently.





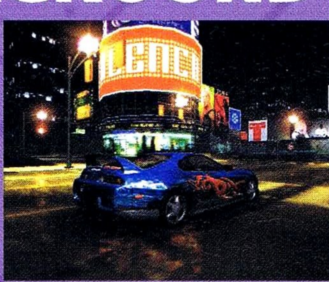

The slopes have taken on a more realistic appearance.

SSX 3


The inevitable sequel to what is still a superlative downhill, trick-based racer. Expect this third instalment to boast better tricks, and a bigger cast of characters. Rather than just piling on more of those multicoloured courses, *SSX 3* will feature huge free-roaming mountains for you to explore. Also, the straight-up race theme will be replaced with challenge-based missions.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

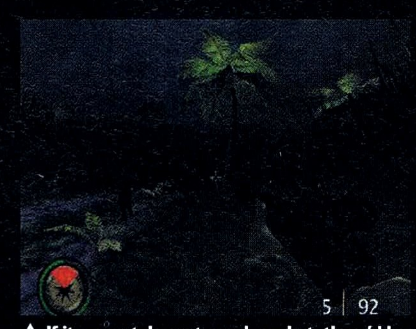

They can't really make it any worse than the last one, can they? This time, nocturnal street racing is the order of the day. You'll be able to take control of real-world vehicles and, by winning races, you'll be able to buy custom parts to soup up your motor. Bling bling, etc.


So far so good. We hope they include more cop-car pursuit modes in this one.


Let's be fair, now. The last *Need for Speed* effort on Gamecube played like an absolute dog – hopefully this will redeem itself.


Hopefully, EA will be able to continue the consistent atmospheric quality of the series.


Is it just us or does that interior shot get you really hot. Look at it! Look at all that WOOD!


If it accurately portrayed combat, there'd be a level where you sat in a damp ditch for weeks.

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

Jungle boogie! It's time to get down and dirty in sweaty south-east Asia.


Minigames where you contract swamp fever and have to saw your own leg off would be nice.


EA's gritty war franchise shows no signs of stopping. This time set in Asia, you'll take control of a Corporal charged with driving back the Japanese hordes. The game kicks off at the attack on Pearl Harbour before continuing into the Jungles of south-east Asia and the Philippines.

Once again, EA are adamant that the game remains strong in it's historical accuracy, so they've drafted in the Congressional Medal of Honor Society to help them get things right. From the locations and missions themselves, to the weaponry used throughout the game, everything should be spot-on.

The last game was actually very entertaining – despite being quite linear – and so this should prove to be an enjoyable addition to the series – with significantly improved visuals and scenarios. One to look forward to.

DID YOU KNOW? Electronic Arts was founded way back in 1982 (21 years ago, maths fans) by Trip 'simple, hot and deep' Hawkins. Originally called Amazin' Software, it went on to become the world's leading game publisher.

ITALIAN JOB

The movie remake is a cynical exercise in money-spinning, but the game might just turn out to be more worthwhile. Featuring racing, a story mode, cop chases and stunt driving, it's set to premiere alongside the flick this summer. Naturally, this one is no relation to the old PlayStation game, which was based on the original film.



△ It's a mini adventure and all that.





△ Our office *PSO* nut, Geraint, isn't at all happy about the new card battle system.

PSO III

The ultimate *Phantasy Star* package, including the two original *PSO* episodes plus the brand-new card battle system exclusive to Episode III. A more strategic way to fight, exchange cards, and unlock secret combos. End of the year (in Japan), with a European release following in 2004.

SPY HUNTER 2

Believe it or not (and we're more than a little sceptical, to be honest) this sequel to last year's duffer 'might' be made into a movie. Starring The Rock. As special agent Alec Sects. Well, there have been worse concepts. Probably. Autumn for this one. Sects-ellent!



△ Look closely, and you might see The Rock's agent finalising contract details.



△ Essentially the same as the previous game. Make of that what you will.



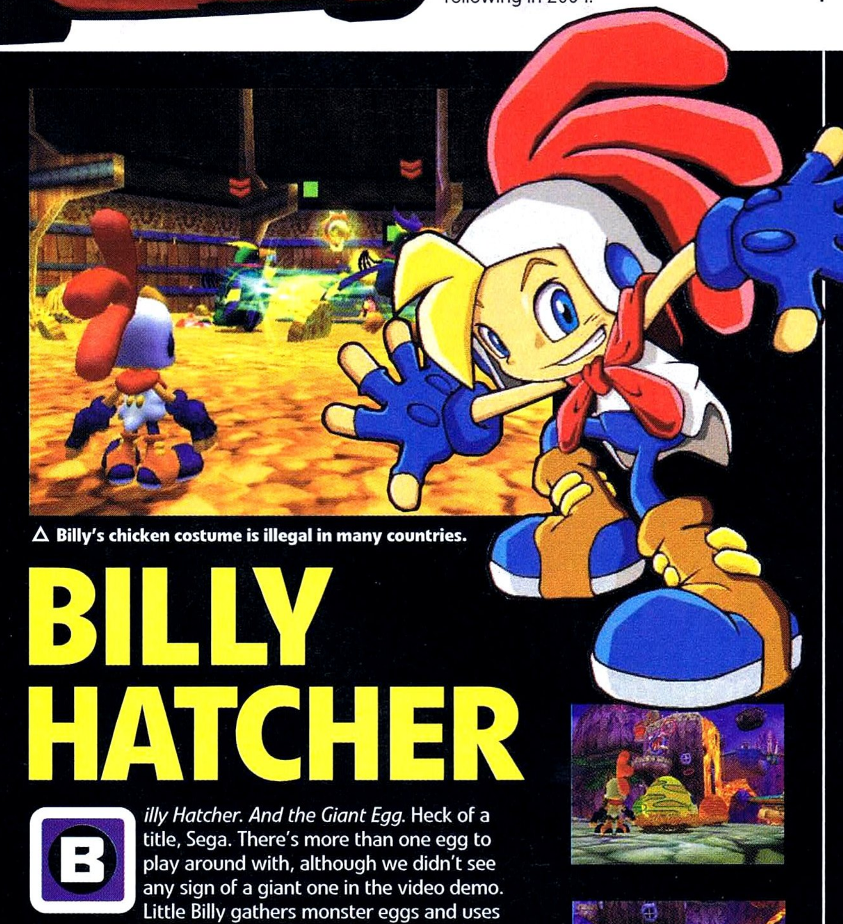
△ Will three times the Sonics equal three times the fun? Here's hoping…



△ Wasn't he one of the bad guys from *Donkey Kong Country*? Too many games.

SONIC HEROES

Simultaneous Sonics! *Sonic Heroes* is a bit like *Sonic Adventure*, except you're in charge of a team of three – Team Dark, Team Rose, Team Chaotix or Team Sonic. Use each character's abilities to help the others over obstacles. Don't expect to see this one until early next year.



△ Billy's chicken costume is illegal in many countries.

BILLY HATCHER

Billy Hatcher. And the Giant Egg. Heck of a title, Sega. There's more than one egg to play around with, although we didn't see any sign of a giant one in the video demo. Little Billy gathers monster eggs and uses the creatures that hatch out of them to solve puzzles and defeat the evil King. The eggs have to be rolled around the levels, a bit like the ball in the old N64 game *Glover*. There's a four-player battle mode too, and the visual style is extremely impressive throughout. From Sonic Team and Yuji Naka, released in time for Christmas. Hopefully.





△ That's not very subtle.

△ He's the firestarter, twisted firestarter.



△ Who needs stealth when you can make people burst into flames?

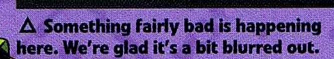


△ Using the power of the mind, I will make you bark like the dog you are.

ESPIONAGE

That's *ESPionage* with a capital ESP, because you play an agent with extra-sensory powers. There's stealth, shooting, and a bit of mental stuff such as telekinesis, mind control and fire-starting. We're not quite sure how it's going to fare against the likes of *Splinter Cell* and *MGS*, but it's due for release in the autumn.







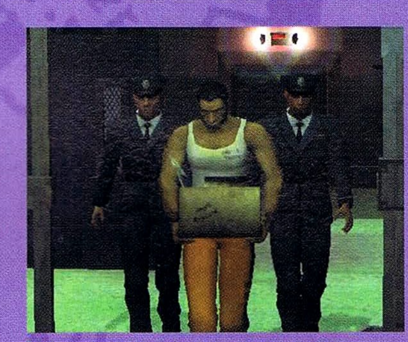
△ Something fairly bad is happening here. We're glad it's a bit blurred out.

△ Gentlemen and zombies settle their differences with a spot of fencing.

THE SUFFERING



Maybe it would be a little premature to start declaring this the next *Shadow Man*, but who cares? After all, it's set in a gloomy old maximum-security prison, just like parts of *Shadow Man*, filled with serial killers and hideous apparitions. And it's excessively gory – blood spurts all over the place, and bodies get ripped into all sorts of unusual shapes. Survival horror in a prison. That's what Midway are calling it. We say welcome back, Shadsy – you've been away too long.



△ Somebody is going to pay dearly for making him wear orange trousers.

GOTCHA FORCE

Super happy robot battles are go go go!



Unlike the cockney version, *Gertcha Force*, this Japanese release from Capcom is all about battling toy 'bots, like *Custom Robo*. Not a good old knees-up round the trusty joanna. We didn't get a chance to play it, but here's a tasty screenshot.



△ There's a lot of kung-fu stuff as well as the more conventional gunplay.



△ Shooting ahead while driving. Can't do that in *GTA*, can you? State of the art.

TRUE CRIME LA

It's *GTA*! Except you're a cop with a nice line in car theft and gunfights, driving around an accurate rendition of Los Angeles. There are loads of missions, plus *GTA*-style free-roaming bonus stuff for when you get bored of playing by the rules. It might not be the most original thing ever, but it's going to be hot, and the Cube's very own *GTA*. Fact!

RACING EVOLUTION

Or *R Racing Evolution*, to give a full name. Could the prefixed R possibly stand for Ridge? It's by the *Ridge Racer* team, but features a big emphasis on cinematics and story development.



△ There are licensed cars and tracks for your motoring pleasure.

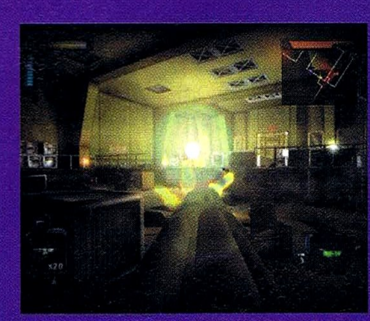


△ Looks good in Gamecube purple, and knows how to clean a spark plug too.

ROGUE OPS



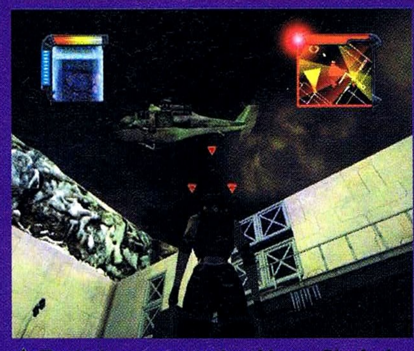
△ Straight from the Big Book o' Gaming Things – the large, mostly empty room.



△ Lens-flare ahoy. Somebody must be wearing glass contacts around here.



Remember *Riqa*, the N64 game cancelled after being shown at E3 2000? Developers Bits Studios have taken various elements from that, and turned it into a *MGS*-style sneak-'em-up. We're not sure exactly how much of the *Riqa* concept remains, although it seems substantial. Hide bodies in lockers, use stealth combos, or activate a gadget for seeing through walls. This multiformat release promises a 'special feature' on each different platform. GBA connectivity, anyone? Out at the end of the year.



△ That's the same targeting thing as *Riqa* had. The 'triforce of lock-on deadliness'.

SPHINX

Within an Egyptian setting, you guide Sphinx as he travels around the world through magic portals in an attempt to retrieve mystical crowns of Egypt. With over 15 abilities to learn and master and over 150 different characters to interact with, this looks quite promising – with some lovely artwork throughout and some genuinely pleasing locations.

So promising in fact, that we're going to pop up to London to have a chat with the developers pretty soon, so we should have some more detailed impressions for you in time for next month's issue.



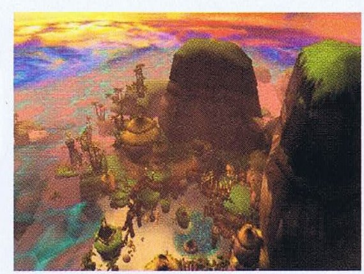
△ Not sure what's going on here. Nope, not a clue. Looks rather splendid though.



△ By the power of Grayskull! And all that. Cringer will feature apparently. In a dress.



△ We can sense your excitement. Bananas, nappies, feathers. Remarkable.



△ Nice view, admittedly. Hopefully the game world will be big and free-roaming.

TAK AND THE POWER JU JU

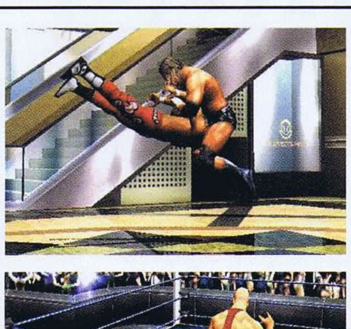
The words "multimedia franchise potential" in the same sentence as "Nickelodeon" sets our alarm bells ringing. Seeing yet another third-person platform adventure with 'dynamic environments' and 'funny characters' is enough to scare us silly. It looks nice, with obviously high production values but do we *really* need another game like this? THQ seem to think so, and as long as they can add plenty of original content it might turn out okay. Regardless, we'll reserve judgement for now…





ROAD KILL

An interesting attempt by Midway to drag the Car Combat genre out of dumpsville (no-one mention *Carmageddon*), *Road Kill* will feature three cities where you have to destroy problematic rival gangs. It's still in the early stages, but this apocalyptic driver sounds like it could have potential.





WRESTLEMANIA X9

As inevitable as its lofty chart status, this new instalment promises to be even more detailed. You'll be able to bloody up over 40 musclebound meatheads, through the use of an improved grapple system (now with more weak and strong grapples) and more counters to inject some much-needed skill.



△ You'll be able to play as all your favourite characters, each with their proper likeness.



△ There's an Xbox Buffy game doing the rounds right now, and although it's…



△ …hardly groundbreaking, it's certainly solid and entertaining. Encouraging.

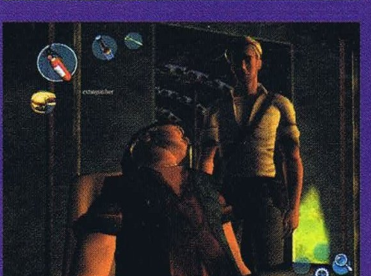
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER CHAOS BLEEDS



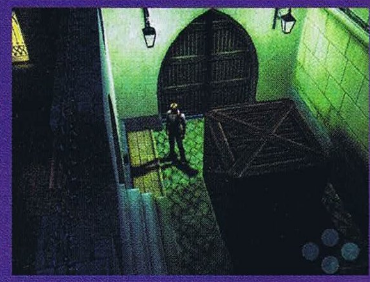
sing the voices and likenesses of the cast from the ever-popular TV series comes this Buffy-themed third-person adventure/fighter. Taking control of Buffy, Willow, Spike and Xander, you'll have to battle crappy vampires in an attempt to seal up an 'Interdimensional Bleed'. Whatever the hell that is.







△ We have high hopes for this one. The PC and GBA instalments were all excellent…

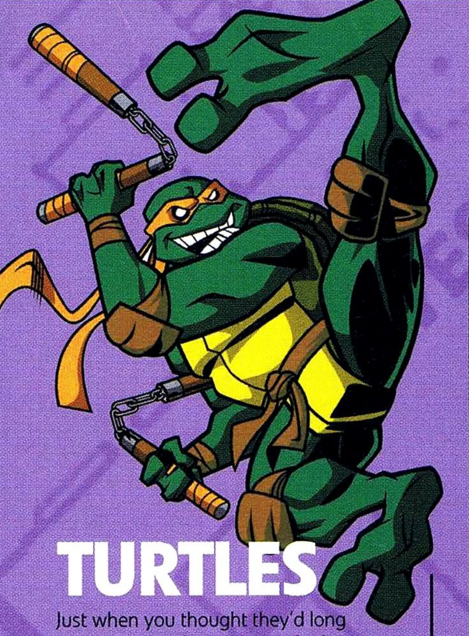


△ …with dialogue that had us, literally, rolling on the floor in laughter. ROFL.

BROKEN SWORD THE SLEEPING DRAGON



aking the transition from old-school to full 3D is always going to be risky, but so far things are looking pretty good. You'll be helping George Stobbart to stop a global catastrophe by unravelling the secrets of the Sleeping Dragon. Expect amusingly dry dialogue, a cracking script and superlative voice-acting.



TURTLES

Just when you thought they'd long since been made into soup, the heroes in a half shell are back. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is a cel-shaded beat-'em-up, in the spirit of the original (and highly successful) Konami arcade titles. October for this one.



Δ Let's hope they get the original actors back to re-record those cowabunga lines.





Δ Perhaps the developers will include some textures in the finished game.

NARC

Busting criminals the American way, in the War on Drugs. You play twin vice officers Hitman and Max Force, out to bring justice to the streets by kneecapping dealers, shooting junkies dead, and igniting alcoholics. Sounds charming, plays a bit like *Dead to Rights*, and will be out in 12 months.

X-MEN LEGENDS

Better than *Wolverine* (see page 54)? Almost certainly so. This one's an action RPG in which you recruit the 'perfect team' of four from the 15 available X-Men, chopping and changing as the game progresses. Four-player co-op play too. It's due for Christmas. 2004.





Δ Action RPG, you say? Looks more like another beat-'em-up, doesn't it?



Δ Shigsy and friends enjoy four-player *Pac-Man* at Nintendo's press event.



Δ Time to pass the GBA and get your wires in a twist. Wavebirds are a must.

PAC-MAN

The result of a collaboration between Shigsy and *Pac-Man* creator Toru Iwatani. Three players control the ghosts, with partial views on the TV screen, while one controls Pac on a GBA. When Pac is caught, it's time to pass the GBA to the next player. Party on!

BATMAN
RISE OF SIN TZU

Ubi Soft's people were keen to point out that this is the first Batman game to introduce a new character – evil military tactician Sin Tzu. We'd like to point out that you can break all the ground you want, but at the end of the day this is another Batman beat-'em-up, with four-player support, out in the autumn.





Δ Why would anyone want the Batman licence after *Dark Tomorrow* soiled it?



Δ The original didn't look quite like this, did it? Our memory chips must be failing.



Δ No doubt the utterly unforgiving difficulty level will be toned down.

PITFALL HARRY

Platform adventure fun with the original platform adventure hero. Harry was a hit in *Pitfall* for the Atari 2600 a couple of decades ago. Now he's making like Lara Croft, swinging through the jungle and fighting those pesky scorpions once again. Interesting, and scheduled for release in the autumn. But will it be as horribly hard as it used to be?





Δ With a gimmick like this, who cares about the gameplay? What, us shallow?





Δ The orange bar shows the current light intensity as you play. And it really works.

BOKTAI



Hideo Kojima's vampire-hunting adventure is the first game to integrate the natural and digital worlds. *Boktai* uses a solar sensor to detect the light conditions wherever you're playing. Vampires are stronger at night, and some will have to be lured out into the light before they can be destroyed. And you can't fool the sensor by turning on a lightbulb. It's tuned to natural light frequencies.



DID YOU KNOW? The original *Pitfall*, written by David Crane, co-founder of Activision, stayed at the top of the charts for an astonishing 64 weeks.



TV shown merely a pictographical serving suggestion used for illustration purposes only. Or something.

TOP TIP
You can attempt this challenge on any difficulty level, but you'll score higher if you do it on the hardest setting.

WIN! £3,000 OF SHINY BRUSHED-STEEL CATHODE RAY TUBE AND DPLII HEAVEN!

Respect the '*Ruga*, for it will conquer you. And your family. Bringing the hardcore to their knees and ensuring the knuckles of even the cockiest gamer remain swollen and bruised, we've seen grown men tremble and weep as they fail as early as the third stage – but at last there's a remedy for all the pain. An incentive to bring you back for more. A £3,000 cure that, once the battle is won, will make your crippled and gnarled hands a badge of honour.

All hail the *Ikaruga* compo! Brought to you courtesy of Atari, we're giving three prizes to three lucky winners. Whoever claims the top spot will take delivery of a 32-inch widescreen telly along with a Dolby Pro Logic II surround sound system worth £2,000. The entrants with the next-best scores will bag themselves standalone DPLII systems worth £500 a pop.

To be in the running for these pukka prizes we want you to demonstrate just how good you really are. You can select any difficulty you please with the simple goal of attaining the largest possible score on the first level. There's a catch, though. We want this demonstration to be a one-off run, so to qualify you'll have to send a video of the whole run. From the difficulty selection screen, right up to the summary screen at the end after the first boss has fallen. Photographs will not, repeat, NOT be accepted.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO…

Just Call Me The Daddy
NGC Magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW

Make sure you get the whole run, from the difficulty selection screen to the end-of-level summary.

THE RULES

1. Video footage only. If we even suspect that the evidence has been tampered with, soiled, Action Replayed, or otherwise we'll disqualify you. All entries must arrive at our office by the 8th of July.
2. If there's a tie, the highest chain combo wins. If there's still a tie, the winner will be picked at random.
3. As we fear and despise foreigners, the competition is open to UK residents only.
4. No cash prize alternative.
5. It's all over when the bald editor sings. His decision is final and binding. Got that?







WHAT IS E3?

The Electronics Entertainment Expo is a yearly LA-based junket where the movers and shakers of the software industry meet to exchange details, play games and drink heavily. It's like the Henley Regatta, but with better graphics. And no rowing. We sent NGC's dapper US correspondent Thomas Wilde, the Scarlet Pimpernel of gaming, to drink deep and distil us purest essence of E3...

THE NGC E3 DIARY

Like the Ideal Homes Exhibition, but with games? Our man writes from the greatest show on earth...

Day One
May 14th, 2003

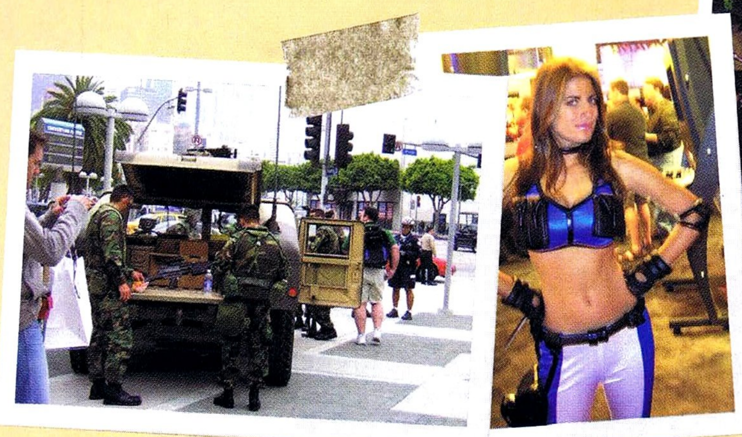
Outside the LA Convention Centre, a tank and an armoured personnel carrier were parked on the sidewalk, part of the publicity blitz for the freeware FPS America's Army. Both were crewed by **armed American soldiers**, complete with camo face paint, smiling happily as they **cradled assault rifles**.

I wasn't even in the building yet, and E3 was already getting mind-bendingly odd.

Every year, around May, the gaming world entire descends upon Los Angeles to attend the Electronic Entertainment Expo, three days of drunken mischief joined under the crude aegis of showing off the next year's entire haul of software titles.

I'm **Thomas Wilde**. I'm NGC's American correspondent. This was the first year that I was able to go to E3, and Jes asked me to keep a diary of my experiences there.

This was something of a mistake.



You see, E3 is an audiovisual experience comparable to getting whacked in the face with a brick. Every booth in every exhibit hall is **shouting at you**, giving you **free things**, emitting **elaborate laser-light displays**, showing off **women dressed like videogame characters**, and providing at least half-a-dozen stations where you can play their games.

"Every booth is shouting at you, giving you free things, emitting elaborate laser displays, and showing off women dressed as game characters"

DID YOU KNOW? During E3 2001, a man got shot outside the hotel we were staying at on Sunset Strip. He later died of his wounds. That's harsh, dude.

E3 DIARY

Beer and gaming in Los Angeles



If you have the bright blue E3 media pass around your neck, you run the additional risk of being chased down and having a controller thrust into your hands, so you can 'enjoy' the latest home-brewed masterpiece from a development house that's been around since last Thursday.

I spent much of my first day at E3 in a sort of mild shock, wandering aimlessly and checking out not so much individual games, as the expo itself. If I had kept a literal diary of my experiences and thoughts, it would probably have consisted of **preverbal babble** and scattered **profane exclamations**.

Naturally, as I am working for a Gamecube magazine, I checked out Nintendo's booth early on. It was situated in the South Hall, close to Tecmo and Sony's booths. Sony's area was a sort of testament to excess, providing an insane amount of demo terminals and a number of giant movie screens, while Tecmo had a full schedule of near-naked 'Dead or Alive girls' parading across its stage. (On the first day, the girls were **beautiful**. On the second, they were **skanky**; on the third, I went nowhere near the booth. The joke was **old**.)

Compared to both of those, Nintendo's booth came off as tastefully understated. Tucked into a corner of the room and mostly hidden behind **giant translucent walls**, Nintendo appeared content to let their games do the talking. They were doing so quite eloquently; for all three days of the show, Nintendo's booth was perhaps the most densely populated of any of them.

As a direct result, it was extremely difficult to get anywhere near most of the titles. **Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes** had a lengthy line leading up to it, as did **Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles**, and the Star Wars fans were mobbing **Rogue Squadron III** with lunatic zeal.

An unfortunate truth of E3: you will probably spend most of it standing in line.

The biggest part of Nintendo's booth, however, was a large eight-player setup to demonstrate the new **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!**. There was actually a **velvet rope** to restrain the crowd here, and even with my media badge, and the distraction poised by an **F-Zero GX** arcade cabinet, the line was stupidly long.

"I spent much of my first day at E3 in a sort of mild shock, wandering aimlessly and checking out not so much the games as the expo itself"

I slunk away, intending to return at a later time. **Kirby's Air Ride** was unattended, though. Its biggest problem is that whenever it releases, it will be competing with Mario Kart, and will be **crushed underfoot**. That's a shame, because Air Ride could be a lot of fun. I'm utterly rubbish at kart racers, but I could learn to like this one; Kirby's a great character, and surfing down a track on a Warp Star at ridiculous rates of speed, acquiring monsters' abilities and using them to slow down or stop the other Kirbies racing against me (I managed to clothesline an opponent with Kirby's Spike power; imagine **running into a porcupine** at around 50 miles per hour) was a blast.

I eventually had to get out of Nintendo's booth, owing to the crush of people. Instead, I scoured the rest of the show for Gamecube titles.

Kemco's **Rogue Ops**, another entry into the stealth-based action genre, was the first game I found. As Nikki Connors, ex-Green Beret and anti-terrorist operative, I received a mission briefing, quietly assassinated a presumably villainous guard with my silenced sniper rifle, wrestled with a truly odd control scheme (Nikki moves and strafes with the same stick), carefully planted a bomb – and was **blown into jambalaya** by a motion-sensitive machine-gun trap. No big deal; I tried it again. It happened again. This repeated itself with the next two guys to have a go.

Abandoning that before I broke Kemco's controller, I wandered over to the West

STARCRAFT: GHOST



This is my pick for Game of the Show, which tells you more about me than I'm probably comfortable with. *Starcraft: Ghost*, co-developed by Blizzard and Nihilistic, is one of those games that someone sat down and worked on, if you catch my meaning. The devil is, after all, in the detail, and all you've got to do is talk to one of the developers to get an idea of how much time and effort they've put into this title.

In Ghost, you play as Nova, a Terran Ghost operative, who infiltrates enemy bases using both her own skill and her psionic powers. It's another trip into the stealth-based action genre, but this time, you'll be playing as an individual unit within the previously strategy-based world of *Starcraft*. As Nova progresses throughout the game, she'll be forced to choose sides between two groups of Terrans, as well as deal with the Zerg and Protoss. Furthermore, several of the 25 missions in the game are set to be strategy-based tactical action affairs.

Now, I've been around a while. I've sniped a few guys, quietly killed a few guards, and snuck into a few heavily guarded installations. Still, when a game that was made with this much skill appears, you have to sit up and pay attention. *Starcraft: Ghost*, between its utilisation of the *Starcraft* series' plot and characters, and its ability to make old elements seem fresh and new again, may well wind up being one of the best games this year. Looking forward to it...

E3 DIARY

"I was half rested, half deaf from the party the night before"



Hall, where Capcom, Square-Enix, Konami, Microsoft, and Midway, among others, had set up shop. Midway was close to the door, and a huge crowd was developing. It turned out to be for Vanessa Carlton, who'd contributed a song to the **Spy Hunter II** soundtrack and was there to provide a free concert. I ignored her, slipped on headphones, and gave Midway's **The Suffering** a shot. A horror/action game set in a correctional facility, the main character's first night of imprisonment begins when **demonic creatures invade** and begin **slaughtering** both the guards and the inmates in increasingly violent manners. It's unapologetically profane and violent, featuring **impalements aplenty** and an almost elegant use of sudden scares.

It's also quite difficult; playing on the default difficulty setting, I was killed in a few hits by the first monster I ran into. According to a Midway rep, I was not alone in this.

Before leaving the West Hall to catch back up with a friend of mine, I dropped by Vivendi's booth, and found that they had a demo of **Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds**, and, even better, the game would be released on the Gamecube. While it plays a great deal like the (irritating) Buffy Xbox game, Chaos Bleeds has a much bigger cast. As you advance through the game, you'll be able to take control of different characters depending on the mission; while on a mission to save the kidnapped Anya and Tara, I played as Xander and Spike. Viviendi's press kit says the final version will also have Angel and Willow as playable characters, but that same press kit features a screenshot of a **familiar tattooed brunette**. Nice one, Vivendi; Faith's apparently making an appearance in the game.

As the first day drew to a close, I found myself with an invitation to the **party at Nyko's booth** in the South Hall, and as I've never been one to refuse an open bar, I decided to attend. Nyko is a hardware manufacturer, and I'll admit that I'd heard of their products before and been somewhat scornful. With that said, their **cooling controllers**, which feature **small fans on the grips to dry your hands as you play**, are actually not bad at all. They're quite solid, and surprisingly quiet.

"Nyko's booth babes are attractive. But they make lousy bartenders. My 'rum and Coke' was actually a glass of Bacardi with Coke for colour"

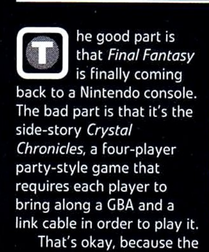
Nyko's crew of booth babes are also quite attractive. However, they make **lousy bartenders**. I realised halfway through my second drink that my 'rum and Coke' was, in fact, a glass of Bacardi with a splash of Coke for colour. Thanks, Nyko! You're why it took me an hour to **find my damn car**!

Day Two
May 15th, 2003

I came back for the second day half-rested and half-deaf from the nVidia party the night before. I was determined to stay in Nintendo's booth until I got a



FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES



The good part is that *Final Fantasy* is finally coming back to a Nintendo console. The bad part is that it's the side-story *Crystal Chronicles*, a four-player party-style game that requires each player to bring along a GBA and a link cable in order to play it.

That's okay, because the game wouldn't work well any other way. As part of a group of four players, you must adventure across a poisoned world, co-operating to keep each other alive while collecting the crystals you need to save the planet. Your Game Boy Advance acts as your status screen, letting you hide personal information from other players, as well as access your inventory without stopping the game dead for everyone else. *Crystal Chronicles* is addictive fun that emphasises teamwork, as you literally will not survive alone. The comparison that comes to mind is something like a cross between *Gauntlet* (the good, original arcade *Gauntlet*) and *Diablo*.





crack at all their newest titles. That's right; I was going to do some hardcore standing in line! WOO!

That, however, was easier said than done. Metal Gear Solid, **Crystal Chronicles**, and **Wario World**'s crowds had died down somewhat, but **Mario Kart** was still **packed beyond belief**, and for God's sake, I can't be expected to stand there in line for more than a few minutes when I am **surrounded on all sides by games!**

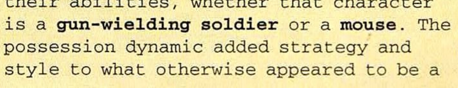
I contented myself with **Custom Robo**, a dynamite four-player mecha-brawler, and **Viewtiful Joe**, Capcom's cel-shaded-to-the-point-of-near-stupidity 2.5D beat-'em-up. Joe is the kind of game I can't believe ever gets translated – Japanese superheroes are strange beasts – but I'm a sucker for 2D games. And it **looks brilliant**.

I also took a shot at **Sword of Mana**, with one of Nintendo's 'booth babes' – a smiling Japanese woman in a polo shirt and mid-length black skirt – cheering me on. Once again: **surreality rules**. Sword is, in my limited experience, remarkably similar to the classic Secret of Mana on SNES, with a little bit of old-school Zelda flair thrown in for good measure.

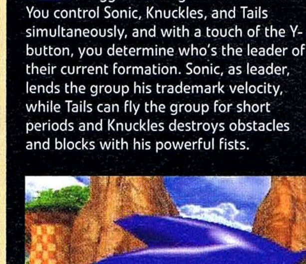
Another title that caught my eye, but which I didn't get much of a chance to play, was **Geist**, a collaboration between Nintendo of America and the Florida-based designer n-Space (**Duke Nukem: Time to Kill**). It's a first-person shooter like any other, save for this twist: the player character **is a ghost of sorts**, possessing other characters to take advantage of their abilities, whether that character is a **gun-wielding soldier** or a **mouse**. The possession dynamic added strategy and style to what otherwise appeared to be a decent first-person shooter. I'll be keeping my eyes open for this one.

After a few hours, I hit out for Sega's booth, where **Sonic** reigned. Sega appears to have declared 2003 the unofficial "**Year of the Hedgehog**", with **Sonic Heroes** and **Sonic Adventure DX** headed for the Cube, and the GBA getting **Sonic Battle** and **Sonic Pinball Party**.

"I lit out for Sega's booth, where Sonic reigned. Sega appears to have declared 2003 the unofficial 'Year of the Hedgehog'..."



SONIC HEROES



Playable and 20 per cent complete, *Heroes* was the biggest Sonic game at the show. You control Sonic, Knuckles, and Tails simultaneously, and with a touch of the Y-button, you determine who's the leader of their current formation. Sonic, as leader, lends the group his trademark velocity, while Tails can fly the group for short periods and Knuckles destroys obstacles and blocks with his powerful fists.

Beyond that, it's refreshingly old-school Sonic action, destroying robots and moving through endlessly inventive stages at insane rates of speed. Unfortunately, this build of *Heroes* crashed a lot, freezing up on me about halfway through the first stage. Still, it managed to leave a powerful impression, and for the first time in the 3D generation, I actually find myself looking forward to a Sonic game. (*Unbelievable! – Ed*)





DID YOU KNOW? Also at E3 2001, Jes saw Duke Nukem eject from the show a frenzied man who had been beating someone with a power lead. Fact!



E3 DIARY

"The next few years promise to be very interesting"

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

It's *Mario Kart* on methamphetamine (*Er... what's that? – Ed*). Each player controls two characters, who pair up on a single kart and take off running, one driving while the other wields whatever weapons you manage to acquire.

Double Dash!! can also be used with the Gamecube broadband adaptor, so you can link up more than one Cube and television and bring up to eight players into the mix.



Sonic Adventure DX was playable, and almost identical to the Dreamcast version.

The other big surprise of the day was Yuji Naka, the creator of Sonic, and Team Sonic's **Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg**, the touching story of the adventures of a **young chicken fetishist**. Naka's touch is obvious on this one, as the game moves fast. Billy himself is almost helpless without an egg in his hands, which he can use as a weapon, vehicle, or impromptu wrecking ball. While it's almost ridiculously childlike and the character design is somewhat off (boy in a chicken suit? Almost **worse than Tingle**), it's still a smooth 3D platformer from a team that's known for them. My only complaint was that the instructions on the booth were incomplete at best, and some of Billy's more interesting moves were only hinted at. Obviously, that won't be a problem in the final version.

Day Three May 16th, 2003

I had been lucky so far, but now **Los Angeles traffic**, combined with some car trouble, reared its ugly head. I didn't get to the convention centre until one o'clock in the afternoon. I had only a few hours to try to do everything I'd been putting off.

I stopped by Blizzard's booth while I was looking for Namco's, and found myself talking to Rob Huebner, the president of Nihilistic, the company which is co-developing **Starcraft: Ghost**. He was good enough to give me a sort of guided tour of Ghost's first level.

I did find Namco's booth eventually, though. They turned out to be playing up **Soul Calibur II** for all it was worth (which, admittedly, isn't anything to be ashamed of; as noted last issue, Soul Calibur II is dead sexy), and that was about it. The other games they were demoing were all titles that have already been released in North America anyway, like **Xenosaga**. Yay. Thanks for showing up, guys.

It wasn't a total loss, though, as Namco's booth was close to Capcom's. Unfortunately, aside from an occasional showing of a trailer, there was **no word whatsoever** regarding **Biohazard 4**. There

"Aside from an occasional showing of a trailer, there was no word whatsoever regarding Biohazard 4 at the Capcom stand"





DID YOU KNOW? The LA Convention Centre contains 870,000 square feet of pure space, as well as "two towering glass and steel pavilions" which "epitomise the architectural and aesthetic uniqueness of the centre". It says here. The Lakers play B-ball in there.



was plenty of **Resi Evil** to be had at the show, but none of it was for the Cube.

While I was in Capcom's booth, I took some time to play **P.N.03**, and I have to agree with Geraint's review from last issue; the control system is **flat-out weird**. I'd been looking forward to P.N.03 for months, and it's a lot more fun to watch than it is to play.

The last thing I checked out at E3 was **Final Fantasy Tactics Advance**, which may well take the coveted title of best Game Boy Advance cart at the show. I played through most of the game's opening scenario, a **no-holds-barred snowball fight** between some adorable little tykes, and, like Sword of Mana, it appears to operate on the 'it wasn't broken, so why fix it?' theory of game design. When your predecessor is the near-sublime Final Fantasy Tactics, this is a sound plan. If turn-based strategy is your thing, be prepared to check this out.

gaming and as gaming continues to probe the limits of what it's capable of. These next few years, regardless of platform, promise to be very, very interesting.

But that's just **rampant speculation**. Right now, three days after the fact, I'm still

"I had a lot of things running through my mind, mostly about how much my feet hurt"

I had a lot of things running through my mind as I left E3 that Friday, most of them about how tired I was and **how much my feet hurt**. Still, there was a lot at the show to get your mind going.

The theme of E3, more than anything else, seemed to be about evolution and growth, as the mainstream media discovers

overwhelmed with the whole experience.

I can't wait until next year.

METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES

Under the guidance of Hideo Kojima, the man behind *Metal Gear Solid*, and little-known game designer Shigeru Miyamoto, Silicon Knights are working on *Twin Snakes*, a remake of the original *Metal Gear Solid*. *Twin Snakes* weds the original game's story with Snake's advanced moves list from *Metal Gear Solid 2*, the extra graphical power of the Gamecube, and a damn sight more gore than the first game was capable of showing.

While it's slightly disappointing that we're not getting an original *Metal Gear* adventure, anyone who didn't get the chance to play the original *MGS* should leap at the chance. *Metal Gear Solid* is, after all, considered by many people to be the single best game on PlayStation (me, I prefer *Symphony of the Night*), and Snake's expanded capabilities should lend themselves to a nearly-new gameplay experience. Here's hoping this is the start of a beautiful friendship...





WARIO WORLD

You might be expecting something in the vein of *Super Mario Sunshine* for Wario's first foray on the Gamecube. You'd be wrong. *Wario World* is actually more of an action title, with remarkably little platforming. It feels more like a left-to-right scrolling beat-'em-up than anything else, as Wario's offensive tactics include his powerful fists, and the ability to toss or piledrive downed opponents.

The name of the game, as usual with Wario, is greed. Wario is out to reclaim his lost treasure, and it's your job to help him smash, crush, fling, and knock out anything that stands between him and his coins. You'll collect treasures, wrestle monsters, and punch your way through a wide variety of worlds on Wario's quest. It's simple, yeah, but it's amazingly addictive.

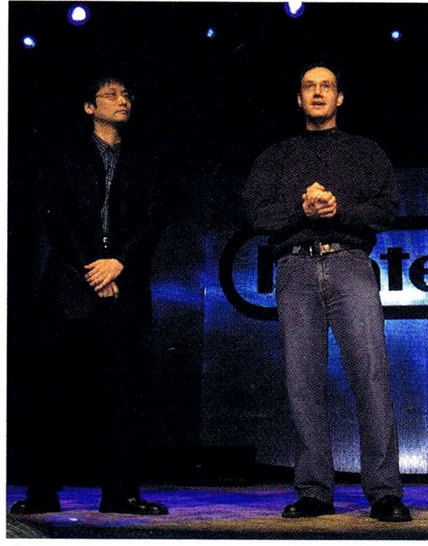
OUR PROMISE

We've spent years securing the biggest and best contacts inside the world's most important companies. Our news is properly sourced, expertly written and thoroughly researched – with chicken entrails and everything. You can trust (most of) what you read here. That's why Newsdesk is the most wholesome magazine news service on Planet Earth.





△ Excited about *Pac-Man*, are you? Or would you rather see a new *Mario* or *Zelda*?



△ Hideo Kojima, looking like Daniel Radcliffe.

THE FUTURE OF NINTENDO

MIYAMOTO AND FRIENDS INTRODUCE NEW GAMES, AND PROMISE BIG THINGS FOR GAMECUBE'S SUCCESSOR AT THEIR PRE-E3 SHOW... BY ADAM PAVLACKA



Nintendo opened its pre-E3 press conference on a positive note. George Harrison, Nintendo of America's Senior Vice President of Marketing, told the audience that Nintendo's overall share of the video game market had increased by ten points.

According to Harrison, this put Nintendo in second place behind Sony – interestingly enough, Microsoft claimed the second place position at their press conference as well. We can only surmise that the race for second is too close to call at this point.

The majority of the increase was attributed to the sales of *The Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker* and the Gamecube software bundle. Worldwide, Nintendo claimed 7.7 million Gamecubes had been sold while the GBA SP is fast approaching one million.

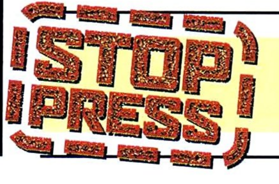
KIDS IN THE HALL

Not all the news was good, however. Harrison admitted that Nintendo have made a few mistakes over the past two years which has cost them dearly in terms of market share. Both Sony and Microsoft have been adept at reaching out to mature gamers, while Nintendo has retained its 'kid' image. Harrison promised a change, and although "Mario will never start shooting hookers", Nintendo will be making an effort to woo older gamers as well as revitalising its classic franchises.

At this point the lights dimmed and the screens lit up with video footage of *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*. Looking extremely fluid, *Double Dash!!* kept the classic *Mario Kart* look and feel, while introducing new gameplay elements, such as eight-player LAN support. The new *Starfox* game was also shown. Tentatively titled *Starfox 2*, the game is a return to the core style of gameplay with plenty of Arwing sequences.

Nintendo President Satoru Iwata then took the stage, reiterating what Harrison had said about Nintendo needing to meet the challenges presented by its competitors.

"This is not a matter of understanding, this is a matter of



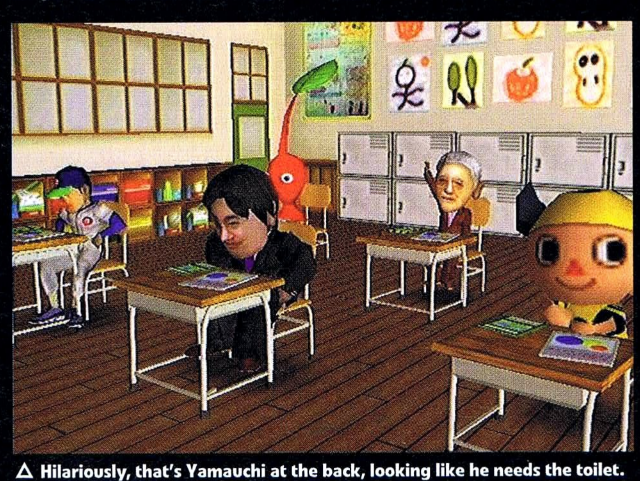
VJ DELAY
Originally slated for a 12th June release in Japan, the game has been pushed back slightly until the 26th. No reason was given for the delay, and from what we can tell, it's unlikely to affect the European release date.

MIKAMI DEMOTED
After recent disappointments concerning financial and

HEEERE'S SHIGSY!

While obviously the star turn at Nintendo's pre-E3 press conference, Shigeru Miyamoto also showed up for a Q&A session at the show proper, which we'll bring to you in full next month.

Entertainingly, he demonstrated Nintendo's game *Stage Debut* (which is a lot like *Talent Studio* on the ill-fated 64DD) by scanning in both his and Hideo Kojima's faces via e-Card, which led to the surreal sight of a digital Shigs and Koj jigging around. Cheekily, Mr M then proceeded to scan Bill Gates' face in – but only after ensuring that everyone had turned their camcorders off…



△ Hilariously, that's Yamauchi at the back, looking like he needs the toilet.



△ *Mario Kart* is a little slow at the moment. Hopefully Nintendo will speed it up.

action," remarked Iwata. "We are already acting."

According to Iwata, Nintendo has been very active in reaching out to third-party developers. He pointed to the Nintendo-Sega partnership developing *F-Zero*. Nintendo will publish *F-Zero GX* (the home version) while Sega take care of *F-Zero AX* (the arcade version). Both versions will share data via the memory card and allow players to move items and cards between the games.

ROGUE FACTOR

Then Iwata presented Factor 5's *Rebel Strike: Rogue Squadron III*. Looking extremely impressive, the video highlighted a Speeder Bike chase through the forests of Endor. Factor 5 are also working on a second unannounced Cube title.

As part of Nintendo's 'mature gaming' push, Iwata introduced Capcom's Shinji Mikami. Although he was not able to attend in person, Mikami presented *Resident Evil 4* to the crowd in a videotaped speech. The video spoke for itself until the very end, when Mikami claimed that *Resident Evil 4* was "scarier than ever before, so don't pee your pants." Something must have been lost in the translation.

After *Resident Evil 4*, Iwata then talked about Nintendo's own *Geist*. An exclusive Gamecube title being developed by n-Space, *Geist* draws inspiration from the ill-fated PC game *Messiah*, requiring players to possess the bodies of other characters in order to progress. One-part action game, one-part puzzler, *Geist* has the potential to be a huge hit for the Cube.

While both Microsoft and Sony are focused on internet gameplay, Nintendo is focusing on connectivity of a different sort – the GBA link-up. *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* demonstrated this via a four-player mode that used GBAs as controllers.

"THOUGH MARIO WILL "NEVER START SHOOTING HOOKERS", NINTENDO WILL BE MAKING AN EFFORT TO WOO OLDER GAMERS"

Shigeru Miyamoto then took the stage in order to introduce a number of well-known gaming personalities. The first guest was Will Wright, creator of *The Sims*. Ever the gentleman, a humble Shigsy said of Wright: "I'm glad he is willing to work with someone like me." Bless.

Wright was on hand to announce a GBA version of *The Sims*, complete with Gamecube-to-GBA connectivity that will allow Sims to move between the games.



△ *F-Zero GX* is going to be a thing of utter, utter brilliance. Oh yes it is.

Before introducing his next guest, Miyamoto demonstrated a new version of *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords* to the crowd. The Gamecube version of the game requires four players, each using a GBA as a controller, to play. The game makes good use of the TV and GBA screens with players all appearing on the TV when in the same area, and on their GBA screens when they duck into someplace private, such as a house.

Next on Miyamoto's list was Toru Iwatani, the creator of *Pac-Man*. Iwatani helped Miyamoto introduce a new four-player *Pac-Man* game which uses both the Gamecube and GBA. The difference between this version of *Pac-Man* and the original is that here one player plays Pac, while the others play the ghosts.

METAL SHIGSY

Finally, Miyamoto invited Hideo Kojima (of *Metal Gear* fame) and Denis Dyack of Silicon Knights onto the stage. All three men were on hand for the formal introduction of *Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes*. Essentially a retelling of the original *Metal Gear Solid* story, *Twin Snakes* will feature upgraded visuals and gameplay elements when it is released on the Gamecube.

The conference wrapped up with a video montage of all the Cube games Nintendo had on the show floor, and a promise from Iwata.

The next generation of the Gamecube is well into development, and Nintendo plans on meeting Sony and Microsoft head-on when the next round of systems are released.

"We will not retreat. We are staying in the battle," Iwata said. So they're in competition after all…



△ *Starfox 2*: basic-looking but fast and ever-so-smooth. Good multiplayer fun.

SHORT CUTS

GB PLAYER BUNDLE

This has to be one of the smartest moves Nintendo has made in a long time. The company announced during E3 that they would be packaging the GBA Player with the Gamecube for a very reasonable 199 euros (about £145) on 20th June. This package will be sold world wide and will open up a staggering wealth of games for people who have yet to invest in a handheld. It may also finally convince anyone with a GBA to splash out on a GC. Nicely done.



PILOTWINGS

At long last, our prayers have (hopefully) been answered. Factor 5, in conversation with an American media outlet, apparently confirmed that they are indeed working on a sequel to the hugely popular fight-sim for Gamecube. There was nothing to show at E3, however, and specific details regarding the game are non-existent. So when, exactly, we'll get to see it is anyone's guess. One thing's for sure – we can't wait.

sales targets for some of Capcom's titles, Shinji Mikami (creator of the Resident Evil series) has been demoted from his position as Managing Director of Capcom's R&D4 studio. The upside is he will now concentrate completely on creating games…

SUPER MONKEY BALL 3?
It doesn't exist! After plenty of internet rumour about a threequel with a LAN feature and suchlike, Amusement Vision have come out and confirmed that the game isn't actually in development. At all. So there you go.

DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.



The 25 games you want more than any others. Most Wanted, see? Clever…



1 MARIO KART

UK NOV | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

By the dark heart of Yamauchi, will somebody please wake up Mr S Miyamoto (or drag him away from bloody *Pac-Man* for five minutes) and inform him that some joker has slipped Diddy Kong into his mascot's new karting game. Even if Nintendo are legally obliged to put that most unsavoury of apes in the game, they could at least stick a bag on its head. And a bullet between its eyes.



2 F-ZERO GX

UK OCTOBER | US AUGUST | JAPAN JULY

"So fast it's practically unplayable," was a snap verdict overheard near an E3 demo machine. But the person making this rash judgement clearly preferred his gaming to be quieter, easier, and altogether more casual. This one is about as gentle as *Ikaruga*.



3 VIEWTIFUL JOE

UK SUMMER | US SUMMER | JAPAN SUMMER

Ginger-bearded frontman for a kiddie faux-metal band hauls his middle-aged 'ass' off his skateboard and learns to be a real superhero. It's the stuff of legend, isn't it? Or, to be more accurate, it's the stuff of *Viewtiful Joe*. Still fairly heart-warming, all the same.



4 STARFOX 2

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

Formerly *Starfox Armada*, now just plain old *Starfox 2*. Perhaps Namco had completed the game, presented it to Nintendo, then realised they had completely forgotten to include the armada the two companies had agreed on. Hence the (hopefully temporary) change.



5 MARIO GOLF

UK 2004 | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

The next thing you know, Nintendo will spring a few 'surprise' characters on us. Like Diddy Kong. Or Lanky Kong. Or Stinky, Leaky and Alky Kong, or whatever the frick they're called. Why not stick Loggo the Toilet in there too? We're on to you, Nintendo. Watch out.



6 ANIMAL CROSSING

UK ERM… | US NOW | JAPAN AGES AGO

Imagine if Warner had refused to release *The Matrix Reloaded* in this country because it would mean they'd have to make subtitles for Europe too, which would be too much of a hassle for a multinational firm. As if. What eejit of a CEO would make a decision like that?

7 FINAL FANTASY

UK XMAS | US XMAS | JAPAN XMAS

Like *Gauntlet* for the next generation. Or was that *Phantasy Star Online*? Whatever – you can expect RPG purists to start wailing about its lack of depth and arcade fanatics to moan about its over-complicated combat, before the rest of us enjoy what's bound to be top-notch.



8 1080° AVALANCHE

UK WINTER | US AUTUMN | JAPAN AUTUMN

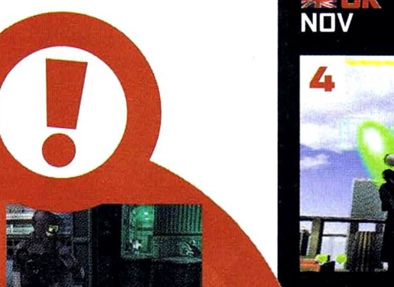
Easier than falling off a mountain with a bit of wood glued to your feet. If you're planning a snowboarding holiday, why not cut out the middleman and just wrench your kneecaps out of their sockets before you leave? Saves on air fares, medical fees and disappointment.



9 METAL GEAR SOLID

UK XMAS | US XMAS | JAPAN XMAS

Well it wasn't the *MGS3* announcement we were all hoping for, but at least this enhanced remake of the superior PlayStation original will be of more interest than a conversion of *MGS2 Substance*. Wonder if the guards wet themselves in this one.



THIS MONTH

Turn back to page 7 for more screenshots from the opening level of this PlayStation oldie, looking all hi-res and lovely after its Gamecube makeover. Is this really the *Metal Gear Solid* you hoped for? Write to Most Wanted and let us know, NOW!



#	Game		UK	US	JAPAN
10	SOUL CALIBUR II	Slashing good fun.	AUTUMN	AUTUMN	NOW
11	METROID PRIME 2	More 3D scrapes for Samus.	TBA	TBA	TBA
12	PIKMIN 2	This time it's two players.	XMAS	XMAS	XMAS
13	XIII	Cel-shaded *GoldenEye*.	XMAS	XMAS	TBA
14	RESIDENT EVIL 4	Real-time guns and zombies.	TBA	TBA	TBA
15	KILLER 7	The goriest cartoon ever.	TBA	TBA	TBA
16	WARIO WORLD	Hyperactive platform puzzler.	JUNE	JUNE	JUNE
17	MARIO TENNIS	Serve, volley, and wait.	2004	TBA	TBA
18	THE HOBBIT	Midgets and sorcery ahoy.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA
19	DRIVER 3	Cars and criminals.	2004	2004	TBA
20	STARCRAFT: GHOST	Third-person stealth action.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA
21	TRUE CRIME LA	*The Getaway* goes Californian.	TBA	TBA	TBA
22	HARVEST MOON	Fun at the slaughterhouse.	OCT	TBA	AUTUMN
23	KIRBY'S AIR RIDE	Bubblegum hover-racing.	AUTUMN	SUMMER	SUMMER
24	BILLY HATCHER	Teri's retarded brother.	TBA	TBA	TBA
25	WINNING ELEVEN 6	Not in this country, hooligans.	NEVER	TBA	NOW

WRITE TO… MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK





△ Prepare for sleep deprivation in October, and *Fire Emblem* in "Q1/Q2 2004".




△ What, no *Mario 128*? Oh well, never mind. Maybe next year, then.

PLEASE RELEASE ME

Slim pickings for UK in Nintendo's 2003 masterplan.


Nintendo's latest first-party release schedule slid sheepishly through our letterbox this month, and in the temporary absence of our regular Ultra Release List, here's as good a place as any to print it.

Not that there's a vast amount of it, at least not for the rest of this year. The Gamecube titles we've got left to look forward to are *Wario World* on 20th June, *Soul Calibur II* for Autumn, *Pokémon Memory Magic* and *F-Zero* for October, *Pikmin 2*, *Mario Kart* and *1080°* for November, and *Final Fantasy* in December. And that's your lot.

Next year, the highlights of the Q1/Q2 slot (ie, any time until July) are *Starfox, Mario Golf, Mario Tennis, Kirby, Mario Party 5* and (hitherto unannounced) *Paper Mario*. In case you were wondering, the *Nintendo Puzzle Collection* retro compilation also gets a UK outing in Q1/Q2.

On the GBA front, *Pokémon* is released on 25th July and *Golden Sun 2* on 19th September. October brings more *Advance Wars, Mario Bros 3*, and *Final Fantasy Tactics*.

November sees the belated release of the e-Reader, along with some cards to scan into it, plus *Pokémon Pinball* and *Mario & Luigi*.

Of course, that's all without any of the big third-party stuff like *MGS, Rogue Squadron III* and the Capcom games, all of which are currently scheduled for this year.

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

Watch out, Game Boy. Sony wants your dinner money.


Having done reasonably well in the home console business, Sony is turning its sights on the handheld market.

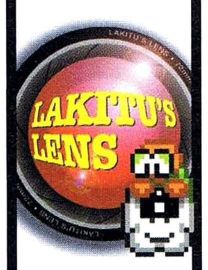
Nothing was shown at E3, but Sony did reveal that its 2004 PSP handheld will be more powerful than the original PlayStation.

Games, video and music will come on 1.8Gb minidiscs. Memory Stick storage will allow data to be swapped between various Sony products, and wireless networking will allow for cable-free link-ups.

A hi-res display completes a gadget said to be modelled to look like a chunky version of a PS joypad.

Sony's people are calling it a 'Walkman for the 21st century', but Nintendo's president Satoru Iwata was dismissive.

"All we know is the name and the fact that it uses optical discs," said Iwata, before confirming that Nintendo would not be drawn into releasing the successor to GBA ahead of schedule.



SPOTTED LUIGI DISMEMBERING HIS VICTIMS IN THE SOPRANOS? WHILE HOLDING A GAME BOY ADVANCE? TELL LAKITU!



FEEL THE PAIN

Peter Torelli from Ayr was watching MTV's Dirty Sanchez ("Basically the hardcore Jackass, if there can ever be such a thing") when he spotted one of the show's masochistic stars playing with a Gamecube controller. But what really sold us on this clip was the scene shortly afterwards, in which some fool thrusts his plums into a moving bicycle wheel.

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

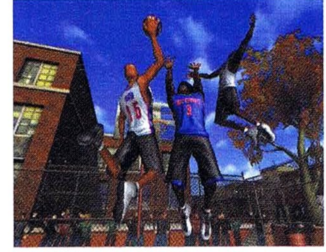
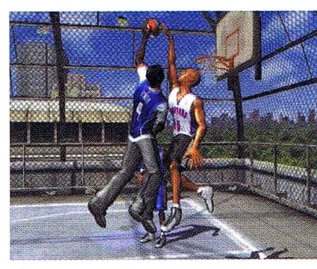
Our favourite entry (with photo or video evidence) will win a random GBA or Gamecube game.

NBA SWEET


Sadly arriving just days too late to shoehorn a review into this month's jam-packed issue, EA's *NBA Street Vol 2* is by far the best basketball game we've played on Gamecube.

It's a three-on-three combination of *NBA Jam*'s mighty dunks and *SSX Tricky*'s simple combo system. Tricks can be mixed up in limitless variations, and style points collected to spend on a huge number of unlockable goodies.

So if you spot it in the shops, we can assure you it's well worth a look.

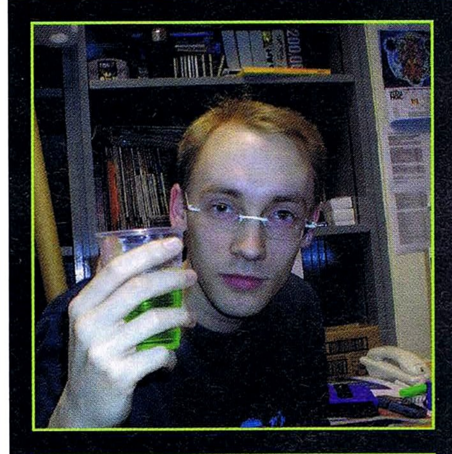



△ The simplest, most addictive basketball game we've played.



NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

THIS MONTH What happens when you drink radioactive waste?



THE TEST
It's kill-or-cure time. If our comic books are correct, this tasty dose of gamma juice will turn him into something resembling an Incredible Hulk.

RESULT
Maybe the formula needs a little more work. Never mind, we'll just nip over to Wales and kidnap another one. Plenty more where he came from.

SHORT CUTS





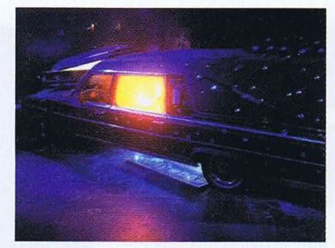
WARIO LINK

Wario Ware is hardly the longest game in the world and anyone who's finished it will doubtless crave more of its uniquely insane levels. Thankfully, that's exactly what Nintendo are going to give you. If you finish the forthcoming *Wario World* for Gamecube (it's out on the 20th June), you'll be able to link the two games together and download new content and features. Waaaaaaaaaaaaah! And so on.

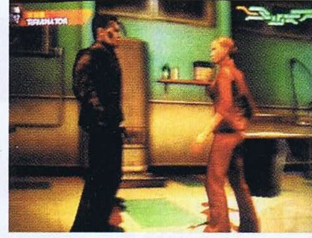


STEALTH LINK

Adam Curtis, founder of Triton Labs – the company that brought you the ingenious Afterburner – has come up with an all-new project, the details of which sound very saucy indeed. It's called the Stealth Link – a wireless device that, obviously, allows you to link GBAs without the need for cables. Apparently it will work across a good distance, even if players are in separate rooms! We'll be watching this one with great interest.



△ We're not sure what a shot-up hearse has to do with The Terminator.



△ The T-X makes one nasty opponent. Kinda slinky, though, eh?

T3 AT E3!

Schwarzenegger on hand to demo the game of the film…

The night before E3 officially kicked off, Atari unveiled the Terminator 3 videogame at a studio lot in downtown Hollywood, and invited your favourite best-selling UK independent Nintendo magazine to come along. Nice of them, eh?

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Kristanna Loken, Nick Stahl and director Jonathan Mostow were on hand to introduce the game as well as talk about the upcoming movie.

Set parallel to the movie, the *Terminator 3* game expands on the story presented in the film, a little like Atari's own *Enter The Matrix* (do we see a trend developing here?). Due for release on 18th November in the US – and possibly simultaneously over here if *Enter The Matrix* was anything to go by – the game has 21 levels of futuristic action. Gameplay features both first-person shooter and fighting segments.

I AM A ROBOT!

Two levels of the game were on display at the event. The first level is set in the present day, with the creaky old T-800 on a mission to rescue the adult John Connor before the T-X (the saucy new female Terminator) finds him. After locating John the game switches to a fighting engine with the T-800 facing off against the deadly T-X. The second level is set in the future, with the T-800 blasting its way through a SkyNet base, reducing gleaming robots to smoking remains. After marvelling at the life-sized Terminator models dotted around the event, we managed to track down Peter Wyse, Atari's senior producer responsible for the *Terminator 3* game. We bribed him with free beer and an Indian head massage and he gave **NGC** the inside track on the game…

NGC What makes *T3* more than just another licensed game?

Peter We have exclusive footage that was shot just for the videogame – you won't see it anywhere else. We also have scenes from the movie. We were on set taking hundreds of photos and those sets show up in the game as playable levels. In addition, we extend the fiction of the film so if something is mentioned in a line or seen in a flashback for just a moment, we spend a good five or six levels extending what was just a brief mention in the movie.

> "IT'S NOT HOW HUMANS OR SAMURAIS FIGHT. IT'S HOW TERMINATORS FIGHT…"







NGC The Terminator 3 movie comes out in July, but the game doesn't ship until November. Why the delay?

Peter The most important thing when making a game is to make sure you make a great one. We wanted to take this extra time to make sure we do it right. We felt that it would take the extra four months to achieve that.

NGC Will the Gamecube version of *Terminator 3* be released with any exclusive features?

Peter We will do separate art passes to make sure we take advantage of the things on Gamecube that make it look better, but the gameplay will be the same.

NGC What gameplay elements will make this one stand out?

Peter Well, he's a Terminator. Nothing stops him. We really wanted to exploit that in gameplay. If you've seen the trailer, the T-X does this move where she wraps her legs around him – basically, she's able to unhinge her joints and wrap them around him while he's holding her from behind. It is really those over-the-top, almost futuristic fighting moves that we wanted to tap into. It's not how humans fight. It's not how Samurais fight. It's how Terminators fight…

Wise words indeed, we're sure you'll agree. Expect to hear more on *Terminator 3* very soon. Meanwhile, take a 'decko' (as people don't really ever say at all) at these shots we took at the event itself.



△ Battling inside a SkyNet installation. Looking pretty, isn't it? And silvery.

IMPORT CLAMPDOWN Nintendo are worried that mass importing of their latest Pokémon games will damage future sales, and have already issued warnings to various import retailers across the UK. Maybe this will finally scare them into rectifying the disgraceful state of their European release schedule. Although we doubt it.

SEGA IN THE CLEAR After much speculation about a possible merger with Namco, Sammy, EA and Microsoft, Sega – now with a new president – have declared that they are

WAS THIS A GOOD E3 FOR NINTENDO?

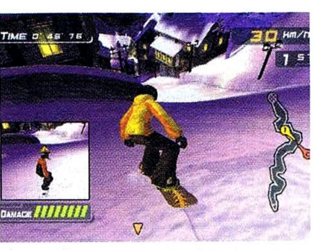
The simple answer is unsatisfying: in some ways, yes, in other ways, no. To be brutally honest, this year's E3 was a very mixed bag for Nintendo, and showed the company taking an alarming direction that hasn't pleased everyone.



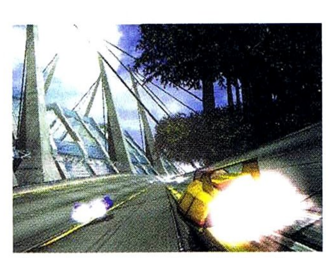
But the good news first. Although many titles were conspicuous by their absence, the games Nintendo did show were all much-anticipated. Granted, *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* might be a remake of the original PSone title, but Silicon Knights have done a tremendous job of tarting up the graphics and inserting all the lovely gameplay touches from *MGS2*, such as the ability to hide bodies in lockers and much more. *Mario Kart*, too, was playable, in eight-player networked



mode, and even if the version on show was strangely sluggish, and missing much of the subtlety present in previous *Mario Karts* (no corner-turbo? No hop? A reliance on over-the-top power-ups?), it was brilliant to finally see and play one of Gamecube's most-wanted games. Elsewhere, *F-Zero* was predictably



△ ***1080°*; another sequel but a ruddy brilliant one. Top-class gaming.**



△ ***F-Zero*; lovelier than the loveliest thing you can think of, to be sure.**

astonishing, *Starfox* offered intriguing multiplayer thrills, and a clutch of other triple-A titles (*1080°, FF: Crystal Chronicles, Geist*) lent sterling support.

However, it was the traditional pre-E3 press conference that worried us. A succession of special guests (Will Wright of *Sims* fame, Hideo Kojima) highlighted the fact that Gamecube is getting strong third-party support, but the huge focus on GBA/GC connectivity was disconcerting. As *Wind Waker* and *Splinter Cell* have shown, GBA link-up modes can be excellent fun, but it seemed that Nintendo's entire strategy is heading down the connectivity route.

> **"THE LACK OF TRUE SURPRISES AND FOCUS ON CONNECTIVITY DIDN'T INSPIRE MUCH HOPE FOR WHAT'S TO COME..."**

PAC ATTACK

The fact that even the tiniest snippet of, say, a new *Mario* was sidelined in favour of a Pac-Man game (which Shigsy seemed inordinately excited about) and two half-hearted new Gamecube *Zeldas* (both of which looked like quick GBA knock-offs) maybe wasn't a great idea, despite their merits. GBAs are portable, on-the-move gaming machines, not expensive controllers for home consoles. Digital controllers, at that.

This kind of thing isn't going to make Gamecubes fly off the shelves. And while Miyamoto is obviously ploughing a furrow dedicated to simple games that offer instantly appealing multiplayer fun, it's a furrow that requires people to own a lot of expensive kit for something that most will see as a nice little extra rather than the latest must-have game. And while *Mario Kart*, *Metal Gear*, *F-Zero* and the rest were more than enough to stand up to the big games delivered by Sony and Microsoft – *Metal Gear 3* and *Halo 2*, to name but, er, two – the lack of true surprises and focus on connectivity didn't inspire hope for what's to come.

Nintendo also made some purposeful comments about the future – reiterating once again that they'd lead the market in the next round of console releases, with 'Gamecube 2' launching ahead of PS3 and Xbox 2. It was nice to hear, and we hope it's true, but this new, aggressive Nintendo was nowhere in evidence elsewhere at E3 2003. Most of the first-party games were sequels of sorts, and the whole show smacked of playing it safe – the upshot was an unspectacular show with one or two shining highlights (Ubi Soft's *Prince of Persia*, for one, is looking fantastic).

Nevertheless, even though we're perhaps playing devil's advocate, we're looking forward to the coming year, and we're expecting – at the very least – much bigger things for E3 2004. In the meantime, it'll be interesting to see just how effective 'connectivity' really is, and whether Nintendo really are barking up the wrong (or right) tree with it.

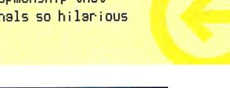
CONNECTION!

We're interested in just how many of you use connectivity with any regularity. Exploring the option in *Wind Waker* yields some tangible rewards and is great fun, but do any of you own the equipment needed and persevere in the pursuit of connectivity? How many of you unlocked the original NES *Metroid* in *Metroid Prime* by completing *Metroid Fusion*? We did, but then that's because we squat on our haunches on all day playing games. Similarly, Splinter Cell will be out by the time you read this – how many of you have delighted in the bonuses offered by hooking the game up to a GBA?

We'd like to do a feature on connectivity soon, and we'll be compiling your comments and feedback as a major part of it. Emails and letters to the usual address!

confident they can go it alone after announcing that they have finally managed to turn a profit for the first time in five years. That was a close shave, eh?

SPY VS SPY
TDK are bringing Antonio Prohias and Mad Magazine's longest-running cartoon strip to Gamecube. Both the Commodore 64 and Game Boy versions proved highly entertaining. Here's hoping that they can keep those elements of trap-setting high-jinks and one-upmanship that made the originals so hilarious to play.



OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

N·GC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS

IN REVIEWS THIS MONTH





WOLVERINE'S REVENGE
OUR FAVOURITE CANUCK P54



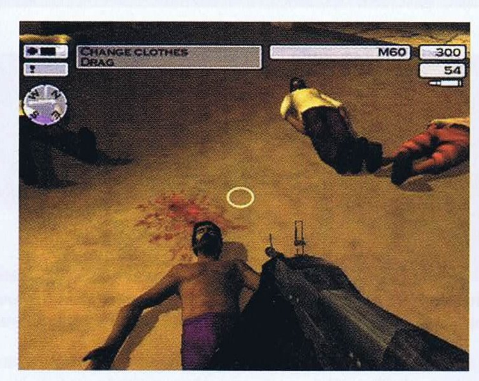
V-RALLY 3
VROOM! AND SO ON. COUGH P56

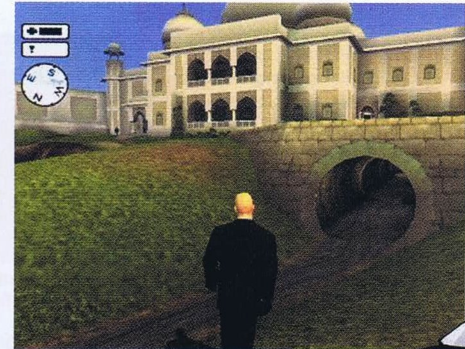


GBA REVIEWS

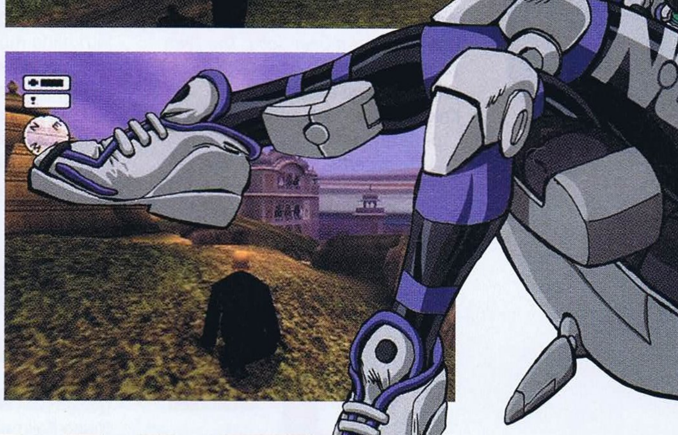
WHAT IS PAL?

PAL is the UK's broadcasting standard. When you buy a Cube here it will be PAL. When you buy a Cube in the US or Japan it'll be NTSC – a different broadcasting standard, and the reason the two don't mix. Import games are NTSC games.





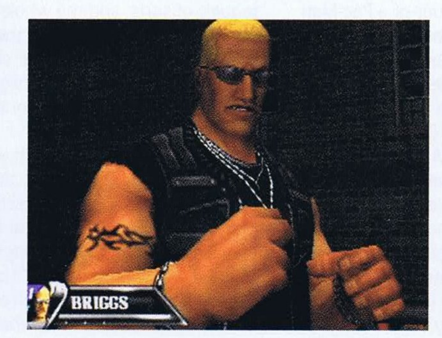




HITMAN 2

Murderiffic! And despite the subject matter, it could have come from Nintendo themselves. P40

WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



DEF JAM VENDETTA

Rap and wrestling, Who'd have thought they'd mix so well? Not us. But Mayo loves it, bless him. P46



RED FACTION II

The new *Perfect Dark*? Or a game that tries hard but is ultimately disappointing? Have a guess… P48



ISS 3

The greatest football game there ever was has fallen from grace of late, with even the accursed *FIFA* franchise getting its act together. Can this latest instalment fix matters? P30

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. And in the new **NGC**, things just got better. Our Field of Play and Event-o-meter regulars will pinpoint a game's strengths, yet our verdicts remain the most honest around.



HULK

Predictably, Hulk smash! A simple but effective outing for the jolly green giant in this film tie-in. Break men and helicopters alike. Yes. **P60**



TUBE SLIDER

A game that wants to be *F-Zero* badly, but the developers forgot to put the gameplay in. **P68**

1 GET INTO THE GAME

■ The quickest and smartest way for you to get started...



2 FIELD OF PLAY

■ The game's best bit taken apart and lovingly analysed...

3 EVENT-O-METER

■ The good bits, the bad bits – all in handy graph-form...



4 THE SCORE BAR

■ The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure...

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict on whether you should purchase a game.

+

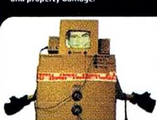
■ Become a giant robot overlord!
■ Smash aside the fleshling hordes!

–

■ Not so good at marketing.
■ Greener works near you.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Crush The Humans!
Metalsoft
NGC/123, 87%
Less marketing, more senseless flesh-smashing and property damage.



8 VISUALS

Beautiful suits and gleaming titanium robots of death.

7 SOUNDS

"*Zelda* is a very important game for Nintendo".

9 MASTERY

So good at its job that it doesn't seem to do anything.

10 LIFESPAN

You'll never get tired of ridding the world of puny human insects.

VERDICT

Gosen Smash! Destroy All Flesh is the only giant robot game you'll ever need, and then some.

NGC 82

NGC STAR GAME

5 OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24	25-49	50-74	75-89	90+
■ Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.	■ Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short on any quality.	■ Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.	■ Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.	■ Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is absolutely essential.

MEET THE NGC TEAM

Hitman's here! But Team **NGC** are a bit more squeamish than they'll admit...

Matter-moulder: Jeffrey Bongharm



JES
Jes's lack of 'rug' is down to a botched assassination attempt. "Putting acid in someone's shampoo isn't entirely effective", he sighed.



JUD
Tanks never make for good assassins, as Jud knows only too well. Still, as far as property damage is concerned, they're the business. "TANK!", he said.



DAN
Too drunk to ever make a successful contract killer, Dan took solace in pints of green-dyed Guinness and little plastic hats. "So it is", he slurred.



MARTIN
Predictably, the most fun Martin had this month was killing enough people to create the huge **NGC** *in the main grab of the Hitman review.*



GERAINT
Thin enough to slip under doors and out of any kind of trouble, our scrawny rat-faced Welsh love-beast is the Johnny English of Team **NGC**.



PAUL
Paul is quite literally too stupid to make a decent hitman, despite his best-selling series of 'Sense Talks' "I be a little slow", he hooted.



TIM
Tim tried to 'clean' the president of Angola. He stumbled in, reeking of scrumpy and chewing straw, and was promptly gunned down.



MARK
'The Grey Falcon' is known as a swift and silent killer in certain circles. We suspect such circles are actually Mark's Rotary Club and chess group.

"Fortunately, this reviewer has no such compunctions..."

ALERT METER
A black bar shows when somebody is looking at you, and how suspicious they are. If it turns red, it's time to get moving before you get rumbled.

WEAPONS
You'll find more weapons than you can possibly carry. Some can be concealed inside a jacket, but others are just too large and conspicuous.

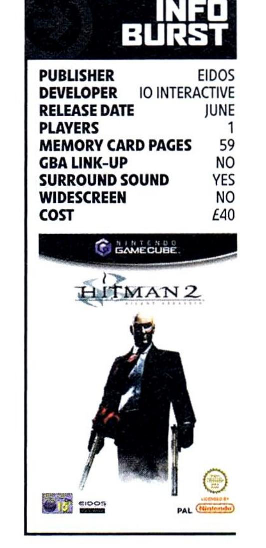
COMPASS
Even after you get to know the layout of a level, it's important to know your heading. You have to switch to a separate screen to look at the map.

CIVILIANS
Avoid unnecessary casualties if you want a good rating at the end of the level. If you're not bothered about keeping score, you can go on a rampage and waste anything that moves. Lovely!

HIDING PLACES
It's important to stay hidden when sneaking into places you're not supposed to visit. Until you have an appropriate disguise, alcoves, doorways or good old darkness are great for keeping out of sight.

INFO BURST

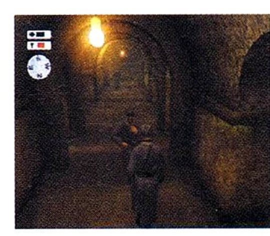
PUBLISHER	EIDOS
DEVELOPER	IO INTERACTIVE
RELEASE DATE	JUNE
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	59
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN

Leaving no corpse unkilled, it gives us great pleasure to introduce Mr 47 – the Mario of murder! The Luigi of lethality!





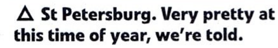
HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

Our six-page review takes no prisoners and leaves no survivors!

NGC STAR GAME

△ This exclusive private hospital has a front entrance, a side door, and a stinky sewer tunnel. Select your route, locate your target, and let the killing commence.





△ St Petersburg. Very pretty at this time of year, we're told.



△ Preparing to wring the neck of a waiter. Well, why not?

"IF YOUR MORAL COMPASS IS MAGNETISED TOWARDS 'GOOD', YOU'RE GOING TO BE DEEPLY OFFENDED..."



GET INTO THE GAME

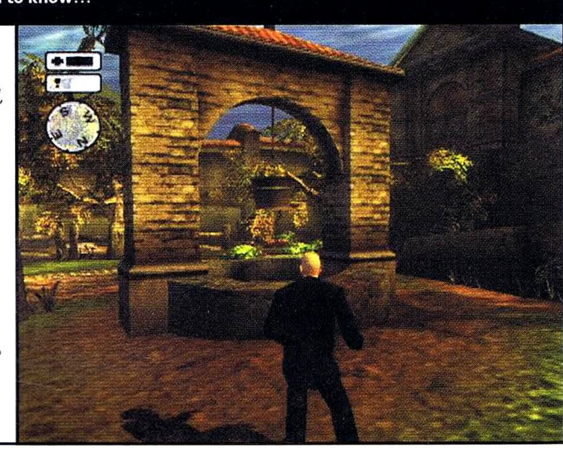
Some of the early basics you'll need to know...

RECONNAISSANCE

You're equipped with binoculars at the start of the first mission. Use them to scout the villa compound, noting the patrol patterns of the delivery boy, the postman, the guard who takes a leak outside the nearest door, and the mafia boss on his bedroom balcony. Match the characters to the markers on the map, and you're on the way to a clean hit.

GARDEN SHED

At the end of each successful mission, any new weapons you're carrying will be added to your collection in the shed at the church. You can select them for future missions, but until you complete the whole game, the weapons will only be available at the start of each chapter (Russia, Japan, etc) rather than before each individual level.





How strong is your stomach? Not something we'd normally ask, but it's best to get it out of the way as soon as possible, just to make things abundantly clear.

Because *Hitman 2* is as dark and violent a thing as you're ever going to see on Gamecube, and if your moral compass is irrevocably magnetised towards 'good' then you're going to be deeply offended by it.

Fortunately, this reviewer has no such compunctions.

The game stars a genetically engineered super-assassin known only as 47, who has long since retired from the life of crime portrayed in the original *Hitman* for PC.

Living in a rickety old shed in the back yard of a church, 47 is pleasantly anonymous – until



"Twenty levels of plotting and killing, quite unlike anything else"

PERFECT WEAPONS

Don't leave home without your packed lunch...



GAROTTE

The default weapon. Tricky to use, but it fits in a pocket, doesn't set off metal detectors, and will dispose of an enemy in a matter of seconds.



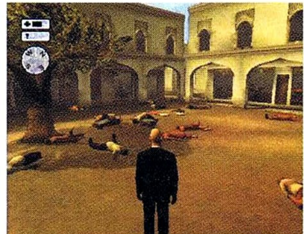
SILENCED PISTOL

An essential item. Silenced pistols are the next most stealthy thing to the good old garotte, and can be used in a full-on gunfight too.



SNIPER RIFLE

If you don't like getting your hands dirty, do the job from far away with a variety of rifles – including one designed for destroying car engines.



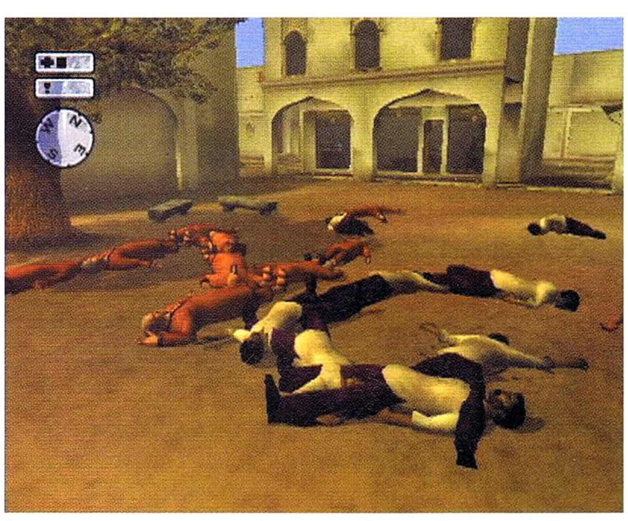
M60

Just about the biggest, meatiest gun you can find. With a 100-round magazine, it's the perfect thing for a nice stroll around town.



#1 WOOD

Formerly the property of a mafia boss, now a graphite-shafted clobbering stick. Remember to yell 'fore' when taking a swing at somebody's head.




△ Unlike most games, corpses stay exactly where you shoot/drag them...





△ ...so you can make body art! We used cult members for the N, civilians for the G, and men in pants for the C.

kidnappers snatch the priest who had sheltered him, obliging 47 to dust off his trusty strangling wire and set out in search of a few necks to throttle.

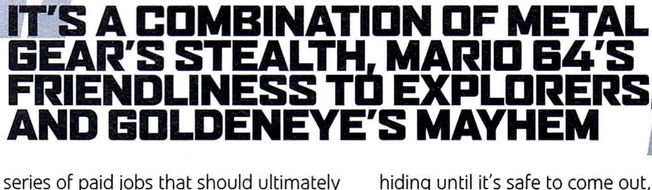
With the support of his old friends at the mysterious Agency, 47 takes a series of paid jobs that should ultimately lead him to the priest's location. While ridding the world of a few rogue generals and terrorist leaders too.

What follows is 20 levels of plotting and killing, quite unlike anything else around at the moment. You have almost total freedom to play the game however you see fit – you're rarely punished for causing civilian casualties or setting off the alarms and attracting a platoon of heavily armed soldiers.

If you mess things up, you always have chances to make amends, be it by hiding until it's safe to come out, or grabbing a disguise and calmly walking past your bemused pursuers.

And there are more ways to complete each level than you'll realise when you start playing.

Walking around to get a feel for the layout of the streets and buildings, you'll notice doorways, corridors or characters that may or may not be of use in your mission. It's entirely up to you to find out if that rooftop over there is a perfect sniping spot, or if this guy's clothes and ID card will get you through a military checkpoint (or just get you shot for trying).



"IT'S A COMBINATION OF METAL GEAR'S STEALTH, MARIO 64'S FRIENDLINESS TO EXPLORERS, AND GOLDENEYE'S MAYHEM"



FPS

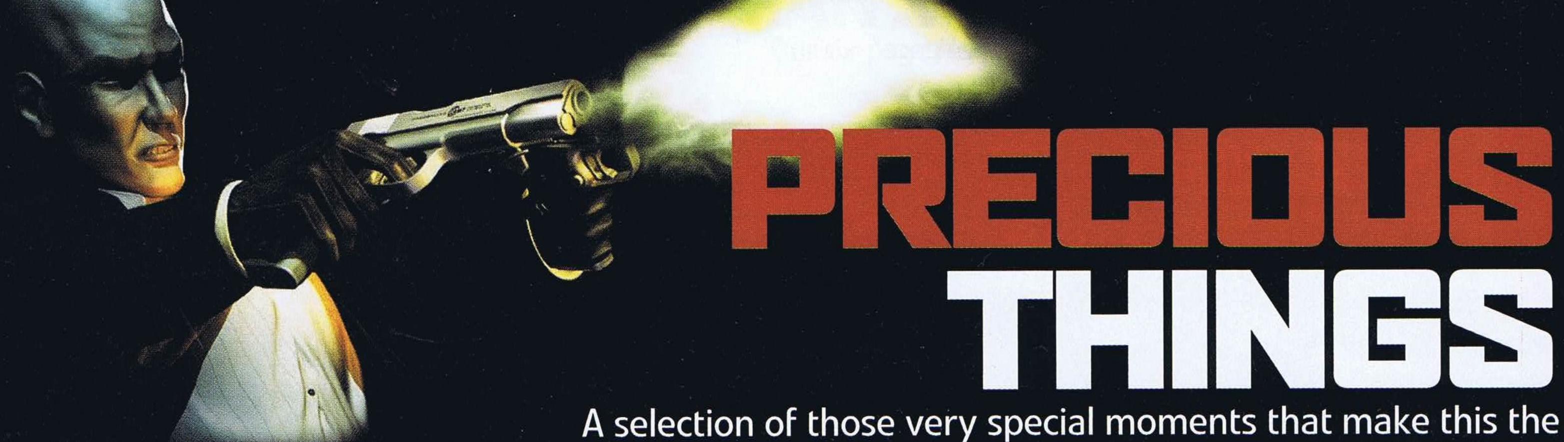
A tap on the D-pad is all it takes to switch the game into a first-person perspective. You can then play it more like a traditional shoot-'em-up – heavy battles are much easier when you're looking through 47's eyes. Look around, and you'll also see his shadow on the walls, and his feet on the floor. All first-person games should do this.

BLAST CORPSE

Bizarrely, it's like a combination of *Metal Gear*'s stealth, *Super Mario 64*'s friendliness to explorers, and *GoldenEye*'s satisfying mayhem.

You can just treat the game as a standard blast, comfortable in the knowledge that, on the default difficulty setting, you can easily outgun almost everything you encounter.

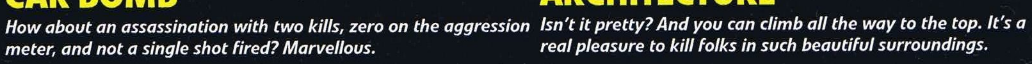
In fact, this is exactly the way most new players



PRECIOUS THINGS

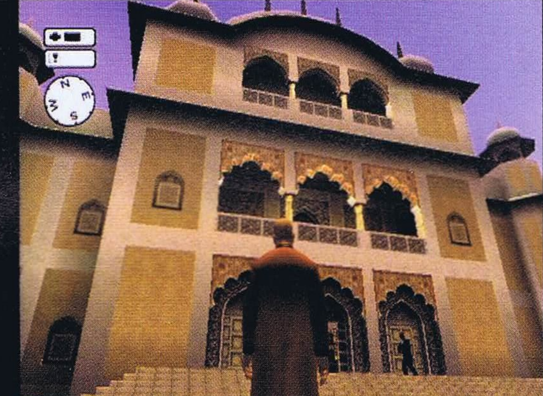
A selection of those very special moments that make this the greatest of all elimination simulations…





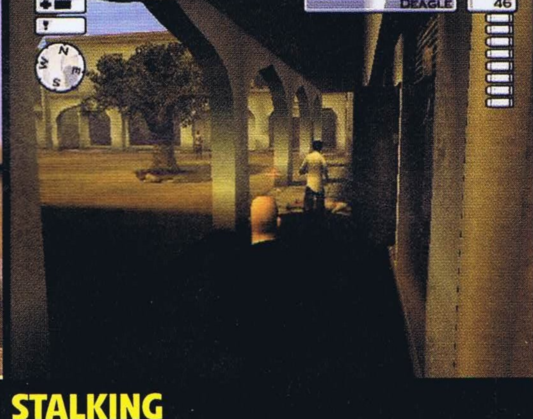
CAR BOMB

How about an assassination with two kills, zero on the aggression meter, and not a single shot fired? Marvellous.



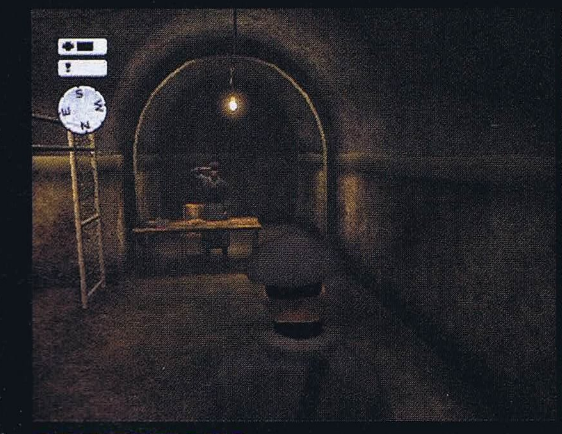
ARCHITECTURE

Isn't it pretty? And you can climb all the way to the top. It's a real pleasure to kill folks in such beautiful surroundings.



STALKING

Run, puny mortals. Run in fear as I walk among you, for I wield the power of life and death. There can be no escape! Ahem…



SALUTATIONS

It's true that you don't have to be the smartest person to join the army. Just know when to salute a superior officer.



HIDING THE EVIDENCE

See how his dead limbs reach down into the manhole, as if beckoning nature's undertakers – the ravenous sewer rats.



I DIDN'T DO IT

Cause a commotion (ie do a murder or three), then dress up as the local law enforcement. It's time to take names and kick ass.



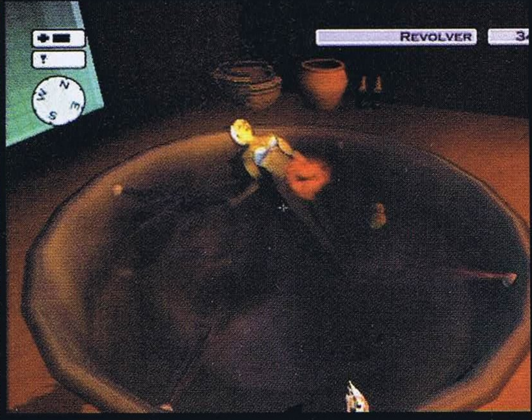
HIDING MORE EVIDENCE

Don't worry, it isn't cruel – this guy will have a soft landing, because six of his mates are already piled up down there.



AFTERS

No game delivers the dark pleasure of 'afters' quite as well as this. As Roy Castle once sang: "Desecration's what you need."



BATHING BEAUTIES

How many other games let you sneak up on lovely ladies as they relax in a jacuzzi? And then shoot them dead? Hmm?

NGC FIELD OF PLAY
A recipe for murder, *Hitman*-style...

METHOD ONE

Ingredients for the perfect assassination:
- *1 poisonous fugu fish.*
- *1 slightly blunt knife.*
- *170lb of sashimi-loving Japanese Yakuza boss.*

Prepare fish in haphazard manner. Serve.

METHOD TWO

Take kitchen knife and go on murderous rampage through Yakuza's house. Maids and servants can be dispatched with blade, while stubborn Yakuza should be removed using Uzi machine gun or similar. Once all signs of life have been eradicated, you can be sure that at least one of those corpses was a Yakuza boss. Job done.

△ The ambassador's receptions are renowned for their good taste, fine chocolates, and poisoned wine.

approach it, because doing it the 'proper' way takes a lot of skill and patience.

But after wading through one too many bloodbaths, the perfect approach to your mission will hit you in a flash of inspiration, and the game's inner depths will be laid bare.

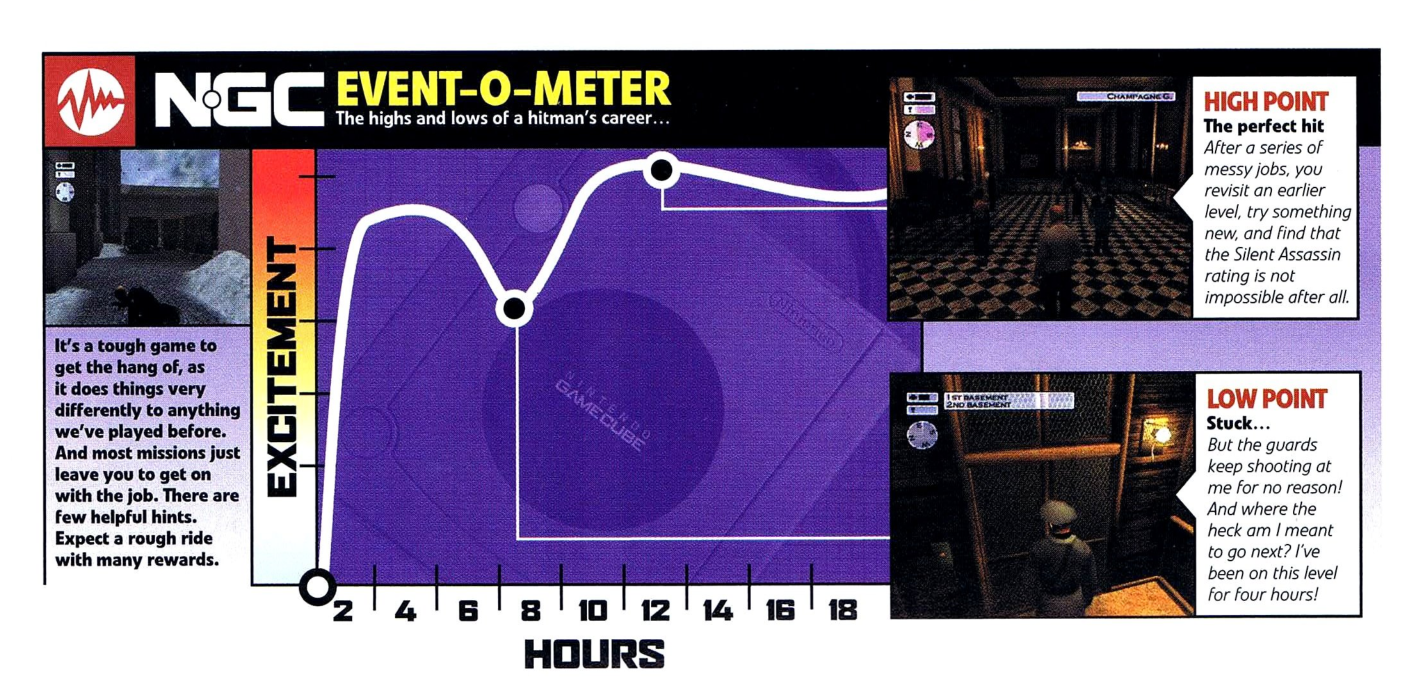
The very first mission offers the perfect example of the richness of the *Hitman* experience – the longer you look, the more you see.

Standing on a hillside overlooking a mafia don's villa, you'll notice guards patrolling the grounds, service workers outside, and various opportunities to sneak just a little further inside the compound walls.

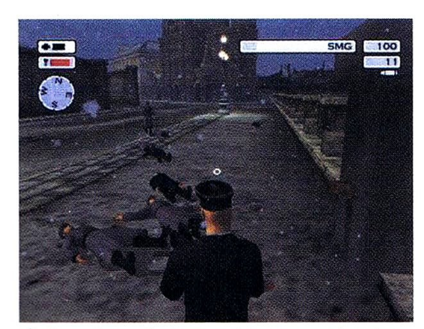
Every computer-controlled character wears a potential disguise, every doorway leads somewhere you might hide or be caught, and there are the kinds of deviously hidden shortcuts that will make you want to restart the mission as soon as you've finished, purely to see if you can figure it all out.

The reward for success is a rating system running from Mass Murderer to

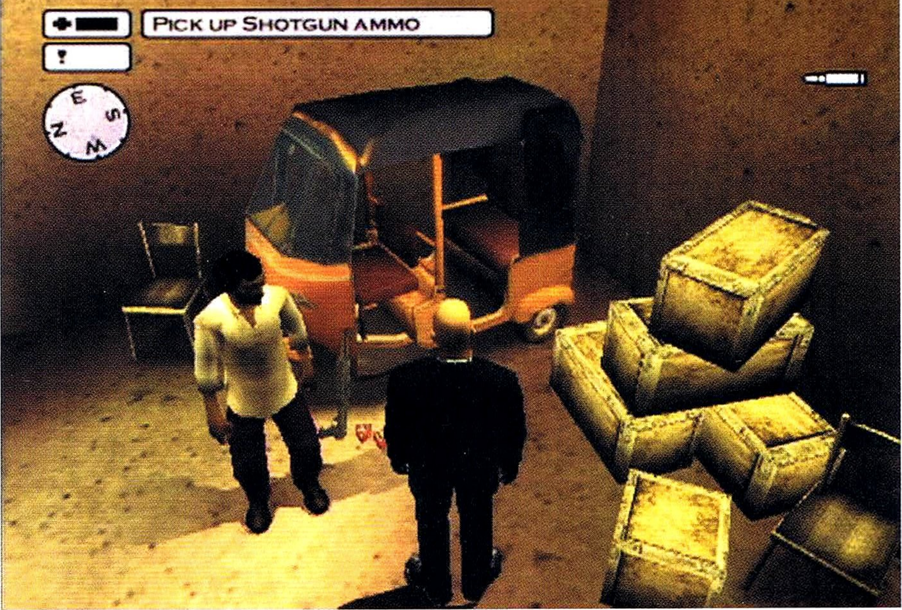
> **"AFTER WADING THROUGH ONE TOO MANY BLOODBATHS, THE PERFECT APPROACH WILL HIT YOU IN A FLASH OF INSPIRATION"**







△ Sometimes the temptation to start shooting can be too much to bear. Count to ten...



△ The Agency has contacts and safe houses all over the world. This bloke gives Mr 47 a nice pump-action shotgun and, in the true spirit of *Hitman*, will stand and take it while you test your new weapon on his head.

Silent Assassin, depending on factors such as the number of shots you fired, whether or not you got spotted, and how many innocents got wasted during the battle.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

There's additional replay value back in 47's garden shed/home, which holds considerably more deadly hardware than the usual wheelbarrows and strimmers. Whenever you complete a mission, the weapons you're holding at the end will get stored in the shed, where you can use them to go play with the wildlife around the church, or take them back into previously completed missions.

You can only hold one large weapon, such as a rifle or shotgun, so the end of many levels brings the dilemma of which weapon to take with you into the next one – if you're playing through from start to finish, you'll only be able to swap weapons at the start of a new chapter of three or four levels.

The FPS-style controls are simpler and more intuitive than *Timesplitters'*, and the fact that they've been slightly cut down from the button-laden PS2 joypad they were actually designed for is barely noticeable.

We could complain that some of the stealth and disguise sections can seem like there's a bit too much trial and error involved, or that the path to the ideal rating is rarely obvious...

But then that would be to ignore the fact that despite this being a game we've already played to exhaustion on the PS2, the technically solid Gamecube version has provided a welcome excuse to play through it all over again.

And we've even managed to find a couple of techniques we'd never tried before, which shows you could arguably measure *Hitman 2*'s ultimate lifespan in months rather than days.

We've enjoyed it immensely, which kind of brings us back to the point made at the start of this review. If you like the idea of a game that's all about shooting, strangling, poisoning and knifing, presented in a style that's perhaps too disturbingly realistic to be deemed mere escapism or harmless fantasy, you're going to love *Hitman 2*.

But if you're likely to be offended at the wholesale slaughter, you'd be best off avoiding it, and leaving this little beauty to those of us who appreciate the difference between a videogame horror show and the best 'mature' title on Gamecube.

MARTIN KITTS

GRAVITY

The game's powerful physics engine means objects react according to gravity's pull. They fall down stairs, in other words. This applies to guns and other items you might drop, but best of all are bodies – watching them roll down staircases can be quite hypnotic, in a nasty sort of way. If they get stuck, you can give them a helping shove. With a bullet or two.



- Multiple routes.
- Loads of depth.
- Decent graphics.
- Very replayable.



- Can be hard to get into.
- Some missions call for saintly patience.



Splinter Cell
Ubi Soft
NGC/81 89%
Sneaking and espionage with Tom Clancy's CIA superstar. Lovely stuff.



8 VISUALS
Detailed locations, excellent animation, smooth frame-rate.

9 SOUNDS
Quality orchestral score, great stand-alone sound effects.

8 MASTERY
A solid, believable world, packed with intelligent characters.

9 LIFESPAN
Eminently beatable, but with phenomenal replay value.

VERDICT
Been longing for something as deep as *GoldenEye* on your Gamecube? Get into *Hitman*, and you'll find it all right here.





YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW

Well, Briggs is – or was. He's one of the four Story mode characters, and this is his third costume. With each new costume comes new moves, and of course increased stats as you spend the winnings from your matches.

CROWD SEEN

Like most wrestling games, the background fans are pretty low on detail, but since this is supposed to be a game about underground wrestling, Def Jam can get away with smaller crowds.

FINISH HIM!

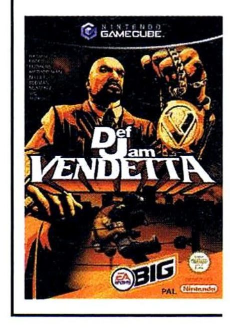
Once your Momentum bar has reached maximum (through a sustained assault, successful counters, varied powerful moves and so on), you enter Blazin' mode. Grapple, and you can execute a devastating finisher.

HEALTH BAR

This is fairly obvious, going down as you take damage. However, you can recover health if you manage to avoid getting hurt for a little while, but be warned – the same applies for them.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	DIGITAL FICTION
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PUBLISHER	MAJESCO
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£45



DEF JAM VENDETTA

The fruity follow up, *Mute Marmalade Feud*, promises even more top sense-deprived conserve action.

It sounds awful. Gangsta rappers? With their own wrestling game? Sweet Jesus in a phone booth, it sounds awful. Which is why it's such a rare treat to have a game with an unspeakably wince-worthy concept turn out to be really very good indeed. Really. No, really.

What *Def Jam Vendetta* does well, it does very well indeed. The basic grappling system is rock-solid, AKI being no stranger to wrestling games. The B-button with a direction delivers your strikes; tapping A attempts a light grapple, holding it down a heavy one; and once you've got them tied up, A or B delivers a beautifully animated, bone-crunching attack. Meaty sound effects back up the smooth moves, and the wrestlers act and react in surprisingly realistic ways to the beat-down they receive. The usual blocks, counters, submission holds and use of the turnbuckles are present and correct, and it all comes naturally to hand, once you pick it up.

You have a Momentum meter which rises the more moves you successfully execute and, crucially, the more varied they are. It represents the crowd warming to you putting on a show, and while it's been used before, the system makes a lot of sense and is perfectly implemented. When your Momentum bar reaches maximum, you can flick the C-stick to enter Blazin' mode, whereby you are stronger and faster. Once you get the other guy grappled, you can flick it again to deliver your devastating finishing move. You've got two of them, and they're so diabolically, outlandishly, impossibly painful that it's worth unlocking all the characters just to find out what their finishers look like. You even get the obligatory multi-angle, slow-mo camera showing bodies twisting in a deeply unsettling way.



WEAR AND TEAR

It's possible to make them submit, and not just randomly, like a lot of other wrestling games. The head, legs, arms and body each have a separate health bar, and can be worn down individually with carefully chosen moves. Each wrestler has their own submission weakness, which is worth looking for, then exploiting.

BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS

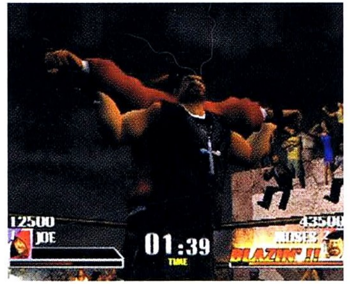
The characters are superb. You can tell their 'gimmick' just by looking at them – the pimp, the preacher, the clown, the savage. Stereotypes they may be, but carefully designed ones, and it makes the difference. Of the 45 characters, 12 are even real-life rappers, including DMX, Method Man, Ludacris and NORE. Play with them if you like their music, play against them if you hate it and want to stomp on their heads. You might want to turn the music down too, since it's packed with 'sick' beats. There are even some lovely ladies to get to grips with, so to speak. Unlocked as your girlfriends in the Story mode, they

DID YOU KNOW? The object of your affections is a filly by the name of Angel, who has defected to the evil D-Mob. She is voiced by Yank songbird Christina Milian, and yes, she has a gallery too.

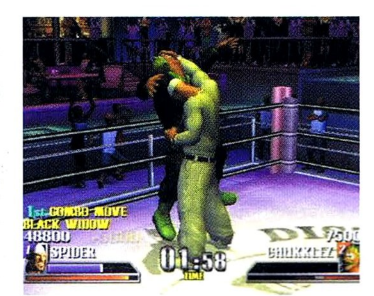
DEF JAM VENDETTA

Rapping grappling, hip-hop hurt

△ All the moves will be familiar to wrestling fans, but they've all been renamed. This sounds like a bad idea on the part of AKI, but they've come up with some crackers.



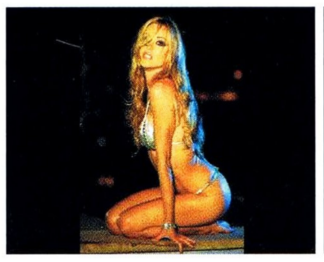
△ Moses here has some particularly brutal finishing moves. Praise be!



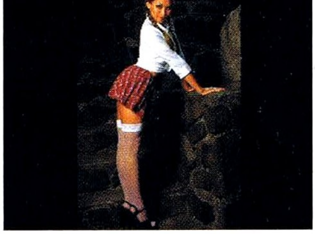
△ Spider lifts Chukklez up by the head and snaps his neck. Surely illegal?

LADIES OF THE FIGHT

Apparently, these are 'fly honeyz'.









DEJA

The delectable Deja is your first 'honey', but bizarrely your attention is soon distracted by Angel (see sidebar below). It's a good start, but far from the end…o

OPAL

After a certain amount of time Opal challenges Deja to a bitch fight in the ring. Defend Deja's honour or dump her for the new girl? Decisions, decisions…

PENNY

Can we avoid the obvious 'Penny's from heaven' gag? Apparently not. One of our favourite photos of the lot. It has nothing to do with the schoolgirl outfit. Honest.

T'AI

The last of the girlfriends you can fight with, until the busty lesbian Carla steals her away (no, we're not kidding). T'ai also has some lovely moves in the ring…

amusingly fight over you, until near the end, where they head off with a lesbian in a red dress, called Carla. Here's the good bit. They're all based on real women, who have posed for unlockable galleries. Tacky? Yes. Exploitative? Maybe. Worth a look? Oh my, yes.

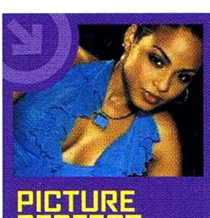
The Story mode itself is one of the best yet in a wrestling game. Rigidly structured and fairly short, you can play as four different wrestlers, and potentially complete it four times, to unlock everything. Beat a wrestler to unlock him in the other modes, and earn cash with which to boost your stats. Sadly, though, you can't create your own hip-hop warrior – a major omission, and sadly not the only one. There are certain basics you come to expect from any wrestling game worth its salt, and all too many of them simply aren't here. No weapons. That's right – not even chairs, or tables to drive people through. And very few modes – Story, Battle, and Survival, along with the basic Single/Tag Team variations.

Speaking of Tag Team matches, when the plot in Story mode demands you have one, it becomes clear how flawed they are. Any time you get your opponent into a pin, it triggers the opposing partner, who attempts a rescue, which triggers your partner, who comes to protect you. It then gets a bit chaotic, and happens far too often. Worst of all, you can't tag someone who's battling away in the other corner, so if you're in trouble, you're on your own. Much better would be a button to call them for help when you needed them… but anyway.

We enjoyed playing *Def Jam Vendetta*. It was a hell of a lot of fun, the Story mode kept us interested, the finishing moves kept us gasping, and the pictures of semi-clad ladies kept us coming back for more. It's certainly better than it seems, but still has some annoyingly large gaps which, had they been filled, could have made this game the surprise hit of the year.

TOM MAYO

> "THE OBLIGATORY MULTI-ANGLE SLO-MO CAMERA SHOWS BODIES TWISTING IN UNSETTLING WAYS"



PICTURE PERFECT

You start Story mode with a rather lovely blonde lady by the name of Deja. Soon, more feisty femmes challenge her for your love, and you choose a combatant and fight it out. Depending on who you choose, and who won, you can gradually unlock more and more pictures, featuring more and more flesh… Heavens!



- Excellent grapple system.
- Cool Story mode.
- Finishing moves!



- Flawed tag-team.
- No create-a-wrestler mode.
- No weapons.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

WWE X8
Activision
NGC/72 70%
Rather disappointing stock grappling game. It was on our cover. For some reason.



8 VISUALS
Well-designed wrestlers and arenas, distinctive stylings.

9 SOUNDS
Top soundtrack, and requisite painful crunching noises.

8 MASTERY
Excellent games system, shame about the missing bits.

9 LIFESPAN
Loads of wrestlers to unlock, not to mention all those pics…

VERDICT
Absolutely top-notch, as long as – and this is the important bit – you don't mind having compulsory elements of a wrestling game entirely absent.



87

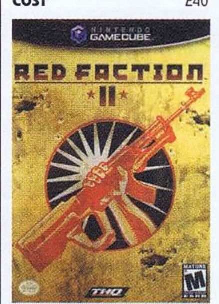
"Corridors and corridors of flat grey panelling"

△ Massive explosions like these are not uncommon. Rockets can be used to devastating effect.

△ These huge Gosens pack a nasty punch, and are impervious to all but the meatiest of weaponry.



PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	CRANKY PANTS
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1–4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	7
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



RED FACTION II

If all children with moustaches were shot at birth, we'd never have to suffer dictators, or dullards such as this…



GET INTO THE GAME

Jump into the thick of it. Right. Now…

ACTION!

Get stuck into proceedings by selecting the single-player mode. You'll need to make a profile for your character in order for the game to save.

Once you start off, begin by trashing as much scenery as you can. It'll make things a little more exciting, because you'll soon start to realise the game's not really much cop.

If you're having trouble changing weapons initially, it's probably because you need to press the fire button while the weapon selection list (activated by pressing X) in the top-right corner of the screen is still in view. If you're carrying two weapons, fire them at staggered intervals so that when you're reloading you still have one gun with some ammo in the clip. This tactic will ensure you don't experience any of those nasty reloading-and-getting-shot-in-the-face incidents.





Ah yes, we remember it now. It's that sweaty, musty, familiar old stench of plain averageness. How we've missed it. Missed it like a hole in the head.

First-person shooters appear so frequently on so many platforms these days that it's difficult to get excited about them. With so many sterling examples to try out it takes something very special to get us excited. Predictably, *Red Faction II* did little to rouse any particular interest for us.

It's technically competent, and in some places there are a few nice touches. But ultimately, it's a half-hearted experience that's difficult to relate to, a game possessed with the drab, workmanlike spirit of the oppressed masses it's your job – like in the first game – to liberate. It's very

Revolutionary fun with the hole in the wall gang

ENEMIES

Not the sharpest tools in the box. Which might explain the fact that they can take multiple shots to the head without going down. Dull character models and robot drones are the order of the day.



HOLY SMOKES!

Blow holes! In stuff! That's basically the game's main gimmick. Admittedly, it's quite impressive to see structures come tumbling down after a well-placed rocket. And some amusement can be taken from blowing away whole walls. Only some, mind you.

SHOOTIN' IRONS

You can't have an FPS without them. In this instance, while there's a healthy selection – 14 to be exact – they all seem a little weak. The only saving grace is that dual-handed combinations can be used for better effect.



ON MY SIX

From time to time you team up with your squad mates. Each has a specific skill, such as hacking door codes, blowing holes in stuff, or sniping at enemies. Much like the rest of the game, proper interaction is rarely developed.

HOW TO... MAKE A MEDIOCRE FPS

Your at-a-glance guide to banging out a satisfactory shooter...



STORY

You need a motive to blow people into tiny chunks of flesh, and what better than an evil commie dictator. Giving him a moustache is compulsory.



OFFICES

Everyone knows you have to trash a few offices before you become truly heroic. There's nothing like taking out your frustrations on a fax machine.



GOONS

It's best to make these fellas really stupid, so they run into walls and stand three inches from your gun barrel, with skulls thicker than an elephant's leg.



PHYSICS

Strip it all down to the bare bones. Forget inertia and all that rubbish, just make enemies that jump like they're on the moon and be done with it...



BLANDERISE

Why have vibrant textures when you can use the arse-end of your colour palette. Chuck in some guns which lack any feeling of power and away you go.



BLAND OF BROTHERS

So... You're one of a crack team of nano-enhanced killing machines developed by the government. Fearful of their own creations, they attempt to eradicate you right good – and the only option is to fight back. Each member has a specific skill. Heavy weapons, demolition, stealth. It's all there. Yawn.

difficult to sympathise with the game's one-dimensional characters, and to be honest, if someone had reset the Gamecube just before the end sequence, we couldn't have cared less. The major problem with *Red Faction II* is that it simply isn't *interesting* enough.

> **SAVE FOR SOME BRIGHT NEON SIGNS, STARKLY LIT INTERIORS, AND THE ODD WINDOW, THIS GAME IS ALL ABOUT THE BROWN**

This partly boils down to the game's presentation. It's very hard to pick out any redeeming features at all in this area. The front end does nothing to inspire, the character models – with their jagged edges, moonwalking motion and mechanical animation – aren't particularly impressive, and the bland environments, although fairly diverse, are uniformly grim.

Save for some bright neon signs, starkly lit interiors, and the odd window, this game is all about the brown. Grey, brown, grey and, um, brown, make up the majority of the locations. The fact that the textures are pretty poor doesn't help much either. Corridors and corridors of dull grey panelling are rubbish. They were rubbish in *Jedi Outcast* and *Red Faction II* isn't going to change your



△ **It's hardly *Timesplitters*, but the multiplayer is still enjoyable.**

FIELD OF PLAY

Taking a look at the game's defining feature – the much-touted Geo-Mod engine...

SUCK & BLOW

So you've trashed a few interiors have you? How about using it for the game proper? You know you need to get into a certain building. The door is locked, so you can just blow it off, right? Er... wrong. How about blowing the back wall out, then? Um... sorry, no. Crap!

KABOOM

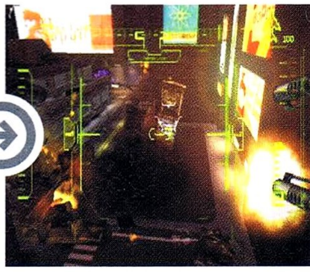
Phase 1: "Ooh, Ooh! I can blow hole in walls with my rocket launcher! I wonder if I can trash the whole office?" Try it in some areas and you'll be satisfied with the results. You can even demolish gantries and watch hapless goons fall through the holes. It's initially very entertaining.

CITYSCAPE

For all its faults, Red Faction does a decent job of making you feel as though you're in a dystopian society – with plenty of tannoy announcements, posters, propaganda and cowering NPCs. Hardly amazing, but worth a mention.







ON THE RAILS

Every now and again, sections pop up where you get to control a big gun and fire it wildly at enemies as your chopper/tank/whatever flies about on rails. While these are a nice diversion, all you're really doing is holding down both fire buttons and waving the crosshair around.

"YOU CAN BLOW A CHECKPOINT TO PIECES WITH A ROCKET LAUNCHER, YET LIGHTS PROVE COMPLETELY INDESTRUCTIBLE"



△ The shotgun's incendiary shells make dimwitted NPCs scream in terror. Lovely.

mind in a hurry.

It doesn't take long to get the impression that the game has little more to offer in the levels that follow, either, and you'll soon feel the desire to continue slowly ebb away.

Anyone who's played the original will know that part of *Red Faction*'s 'appeal' is its exclusive Geo-Mod engine, which enables you to 'alter your environment', although this essentially boils down to the fact that you can blow ruddy great holes in walls (as well as people) with a suitably explosive weapon.

A fantastic feature in theory, but as initially novel – and occasionally impressive – as it is, it simply hasn't been implemented well enough. Sure, you can blow holes in walls and structures, but only in the walls and structures the game says you can.

You may, for example, be able to blow a hole in a concrete barricade, or the walls of a non-essential building. However, if you find a building with a locked door and reckon you can blow a hole in the back for a spot of surprise rear-entry, think again – unless it's anticipated in the script, the game will deny you the pleasure. Disappointing.

RED FACTION II

Revolutionary fun with the hole in the wall gang



△ **On-rails sections are enjoyable, but they don't prove particularly challenging. Just hold down A and spray.**





△ **NPC dialogue is impressive and provides clues to help you.**



△ **Night vision is available from the word go, although the function is rarely explored fully.**



△ **While there are a few impressive moments in the levels, for the most part they're relatively unimaginative and extremely linear in design.**



△ **Here's the Geo-Mod in action. There are a few neat touches that use this function – like blowing concrete off bridge supports in order to place a bomb.**

And the hype about Geo-Mod is made all the more ridiculous when you realise the daft inconsistencies in the game's environments. You can blow a checkpoint to pieces with a rocket launcher, yet lights prove completely indestructible – which is a shame, considering you have night-vision. Plush offices can be turned into open-plan battlefields, while plywood billboards get away with a charred facelift.

This sort of thing doesn't just apply to the scenery either. Some of the enemies don't respond well to gunfire. As in, they don't respond at all. It's not unusual to unload an entire magazine into someone's face only for him to… run away. Hello? Head shots, anyone?

RED ARMY

Still, the game isn't utterly shambolic and there are some areas that manage to drag *Red Faction II* back onto the 'worth a rental' part of the scale.

There is a mildly absorbing story running in the background, and although the clichéd band-of-renegades toppling-a-evil-communist-dictator hook is hardly original, the game's use of sound (particularly the little announcements and bits of dialogue from the NPCs) does help to improve the atmosphere.

So although you never really find yourself caring about the people you're supposed to be saving (they're far too generic and robotic for that), there is, at times, a little incentive to continue.

There are also a few rather innovative touches included. The weapons system is certainly worth a mention, with the shoulder triggers activating weapons in either hand. This means you can use different combinations of weaponry, as well as enabling you to fire off one weapon while the other is reloading, thus maintaining a constant volley of fire.

On top of that, you have a Heroics meter that goes up or down depending on factors such as how many innocent civilians you waste. Shoot too many and you'll get a bad ending. Play nice and you'll get to see the 'proper' one.

Unfortunately, for all its attempts to bring new ideas to the table, *Red Faction II* still fails to make itself particularly worthy of attention. None of its core ideas, good though some are, are really explored well enough. The linear levels offer little in the way of exploration, and the Geo-Mod technology doesn't add anything especially worthwhile to the game. All in all, something of an underachiever.

GERAINT EVANS



CAMERA SHY

This is one of our favourite moments in the game. On entering a television studio, you hear a running report by one of the newsreaders about your progress in the building. Eventually you find him in a cupboard talking to a camera. Let him talk for long enough and he'll go on about how ugly you are. Once he's finished you can shoot him in the face. Funny.



- Amusing NPCs.
- Fairly atmospheric.
- Some nice ideas.
- It works… just.



- It's all quite bland.
- Very linear levels.
- On-rails shooting sections are rubbish.



Timesplitters 2
Nintendo
NGC/73 92%
Great single-player and masterful multiplayer make this essential.



6 VISUALS

Varied stages, but despite nice details, rather bland.

7 SOUNDS

Plenty of dialogue that's both funny and atmospheric. Nice.

6 MASTERY

A slightly optimised PS2 port. Not that impressive.

7 LIFESPAN

A decent challenge and an enjoyable enough multiplayer.

VERDICT

Does the job, and some interesting ideas, but compared to the likes of *Timesplitters* and *Metroid* it doesn't really cut it.





"Having a good grasp of the basics is where *ISS* excels"



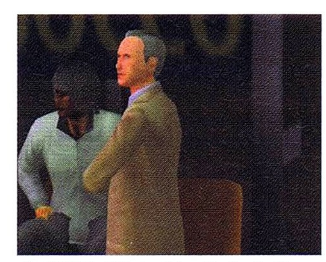
△ Kind of like a virtual version of Everton journeyman Lee Carsley, *ISS 3* plays a solid, predictable and extremely workmanlike game of football.



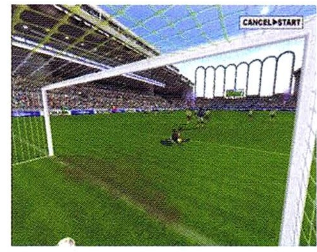
△ Close-Up mode may look fancy, but sadly it's useless. Bah.



△ Training mode lets you hone your skills in all kinds of situations.



△ *ISS 3* is filled with off-the-ball extras like this cut-scene. Lovely!



△ An all-new goal-cam gives you an ultra-realistic view of the action.



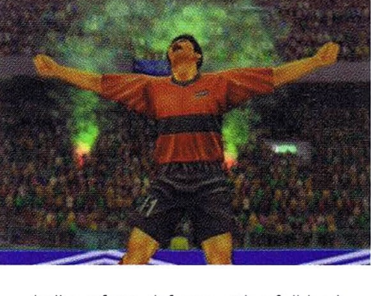


△ Forget simply designing your own footie players – *ISS 3* even lets you create your own version of Goodison Park. Not bad!

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	KONAMI
DEVELOPER	KCEO
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	59
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

ISS 3



Kick this about while Konami mull over *Pro Evo*'s PAL release…



For years PlayStation owners have been smug about having the KCET version of *ISS* (confusingly known as *Pro Evo*). We're currently enjoying the last guffaw however, as Konami Tokyo's football experience has FINALLY appeared on a Nintendo console in the form of *Winning Eleven 6*, which wipes the floor with any PS2 version. But despite this milestone getting a Japan release, criminally, here in the West we're stuck with *Pro Evo*'s more arcadey cousin.

Still, being the world's second-best football game is no bad thing, and setting *ISS 3* aside from last season's outing comes a host of talented new signings, the most interesting of which is the game's Close-Up mode. Send a player charging into your opponent's box with the ball at his feet and an icon will flash up on screen. Decide to hit the shoulder button at this point and the screen will home in on your attacking player, giving you closer control over his actions – or at least, that's the idea.

In practice, things get confusing, as the dive-bombing camera zooms in and out of the action, reducing the feature to nothing more than gimmicky ball skill.

While the game's new signing may be getting noticed for all the wrong reasons, the rest of *ISS* gets on with what it does best – playing a solid (if somewhat workmanlike) game of football. And in one or two areas at least, it even manages to surpass the silky skills of its stablemate. As anyone who's played *Pro Evo* will tell you, despite all the fantastic control it provides, the AI player's off-the-ball running can be politely referred to as conference-standard at best. With *ISS 3*, however, it's a whole different ball game. Just like the real thing, run the ball out from defence with a full-back, then lay it off to a midfielder and the full-back will overlap, just begging for a return ball. Playing through-passes can be equally satisfying, too – simply hold the ball on the edge of your opponent's box, and if there's a player available, he'll make a run past your position allowing you to feed the ball to his feet. It sounds simple, but having a good grasp of the basics is where *ISS* excels.

> **"DESPITE WINNING ELEVEN 6 GETTING A JAPAN RELEASE, IN THE WEST WE'RE STUCK WITH PRO EVO'S ARCADEY COUSIN"**

Despite these simple delights however, overall *ISS 3* isn't a patch on its more sophisticated cousin. And while this release makes some minor improvements on last year's version, it's still the only ISS you've got, as *Pro Evolution* won't get a PAL release. Sob.

RICH OWEN



- Solid game of footie.
- Little AI assistance
- A wealth of leagues and scenarios.

–

- Few improvements on last year's outing.
- Close-Up mode.
- *FIFA* looks nicer.



Winning Eleven 6 Final Evolution
Konami
NGC/79 93%
The world's finest football game – on any system.



7 VISUALS
Solid enough, with plenty going on in the background.

7 SOUNDS
Decent commentary from Jon Champion and Lawro.

6 MASTERY
Looks and plays almost identically to the PS2 version.

7 LIFESPAN
Loads of extras to unlock and match-ups to complete.

VERDICT
It's nowhere near as sophisticated as its *Pro Evolution* stablemate, but for a dependable game of football, this takes some beating.



78

DID YOU KNOW? Some of the founding clubs of the first Football Association, 1863: NN Kilburn, Barnes, Kensington School, Blackheath School, Surbiton, War Office, Crusaders, and Crystal Palace.

"A fairly basic roam-around-and-kill-people game"



△ The rugged jaw, the manly stubble, the beady eyes. What a guy.





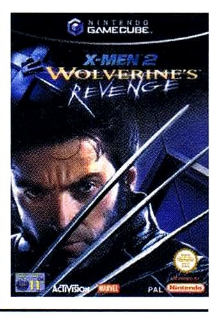
△ Wolverine doesn't even react when he's set on fire. He's that hard.



△ You can even perform stealth attacks from an elevated position, like so. Here, Wolverine is preparing a kebab, which he may cook and eat later.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER	GENE POOL
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



X-MEN WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Ever wanted to be Wolverine? We mean, really be him? With the hair and claws? Then get help.

Easily the best X-Man to base a game around, Wolverine has both the mysterious past and cool mix of powers. Tasty adamantium claws, superhuman senses, and able to regenerate? We'll take two scoops of that and some chocolate sprinkles, please. *Wolverine's Revenge* is a fairly basic roam-around-and-kill-people game, with intermittent bosses and occasional, limited puzzles. Plot-wise, it harks back to the Canucklehead's origins, back in the snowy wastes of Canada where he was experimented upon, and turned into a Weapon X. It's very loyal to the comics - so far so good.

Graphically, it's disappointingly bland. A few interesting lighting effects, but generally dull design with basic textures, there's only one high point, and it stands out so much as to make you blink in bewilderment. Some of the scenery can be destroyed, and when you do so, the resulting explosion is worthy of the Death Star (only on a smaller scale), let alone a crate. Eh?



HAMILL TIME!

Mark Hamill provides the gravelly voice for everyone's second-favourite hirsute Canadian (after Neil Young, obviously). He's an experienced voice actor, having done the Joker in the animated Batman series, and was apparently once in some sci-fi film trilogy or other back in the late 70s and early 80s.

WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Is he a wolve? Is he a rine? Is he a wolverine?



△ Fighting multiple opponents can get a bit confusing, but Wolverine's claws do the job...





△ Did you catch the Beast reference in X2? Did you? Did you? Eh?



△ When Wolverine uses his stealthy Super Sense mode, everything goes orange.



△ Collecting these dog tags is crucial to unlocking new moves.



- Wolverine is cool.
- The later Strike moves look great.
- Stealth mode.



- Combat isn't cool.
- Crap graphics
- Too many design flaws.

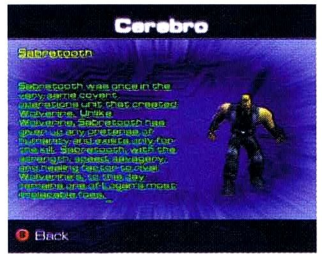
IF YOU LIKE THIS...

WWE Wrestlemania X8
THQ
NGC/72 70%
Workaday grappling affair. Does the job – and that's it.



SANTA CLAWS

See, because these are like little presents, right, and he's got claws. Er...



SABRETOOTH

Disappointingly absent from X2, this fella features in the early levels in the game. By picking up hidden bonuses, you can unlock bios on various mutant folk.



COMICS!

Unfortunately, picking up comic book covers doesn't unlock the comics themselves, but they do allow you to choose different costumes. Hooray.



DOG'S LIFE

Performing stealth strikes gets you dog tags. The more tags you get, the more stuff you unlock. Simple equation, but will you work up the effort to be arsed?



BLAH BLAH...

Yes, more boring information that you may never unlock, and probably won't read anyway. Hm. We like the fact it's there – if only the game were better...

Moving along... Combat is obviously pretty crucial, and the system can make or break games like this. In this case, it's surprisingly tedious. You can fight with claws out, doing greater damage but with slower attacks; or with your fists, which allows you to stun enemies and consequently pick them up and throw them about. Amusingly, if you throw someone into one of his mates you get a bowling bonus. You regenerate at all times when your claws are in, and that's a pretty major flaw. If you're ever in trouble, just sit in a corner, turn the TV on to Antiques Roadshow, and flick back when you're all better.

Instead of just piling in, you can also activate Stealth mode by holding L. This makes the screen go orange and wibbly, and you can see the residual heat in old footprints, and detect scent trails. You can also sneak up on enemies and perform special Strikes when the word appears on screen. These are instant kills, and earn you bonuses. Dog tags will appear over the freshly skewered bodies, and as you collect a certain number you unlock a new set of increasingly cool-looking stealth-kill moves. It makes for nice variety, but the AI of the enemies is seriously shaky, which sucks a great deal of the fun out of it. They take little-to-no skill to execute as well, and it all too often feels like you're just watching yet another animation sequence with which you have minimal involvement.

> **"WHEN YOU DESTROY SCENERY, THE RESULTING EXPLOSION IS WORTHY OF THE DEATH STAR, LET ALONE A CRATE. EH?"**



TANGOED?

Upon entering your stealth mode, Wolverine gets all sensitive. In that his vision and sense of smell become heightened to the point where he can 'see' the scent of guards hanging in the air, not that he starts wearing a hessian-weave poncho and only eating tofu.

Boss battles spice things up a little, by making bosses vulnerable only to a specific technique, such as picking them up and throwing them into a burning tanker. But it's still not enough to drive you forward, eyes gleaming with the lust for exploration and discovery that games should ideally provide.

It could have been more than the sum of its parts, but *Wolverine's Revenge* won't inspire you to part with the required sum.

TOM MAYO

6 VISUALS

Just wait till you see Professor X. Oh deary, deary us.

7 SOUNDS

Impressive orchestral scores, excellent voices, samey FX.

6 MASTERY

Not the cash-in it could have been, but far from masterful.

5 LIFESPAN

About a day's worth of chapters, and few reasons to replay it.

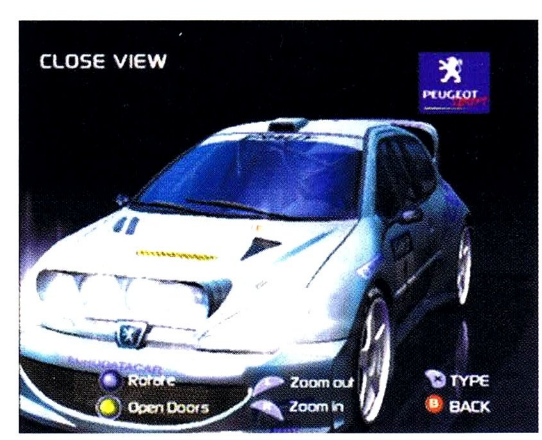
VERDICT

We like the fact that you can find bonus costumes, including the classic 60s gear. Other than that, we remain somewhat unimpressed.



64

"*V-Rally* is V-realistic and V-frustrating to begin with"



△ Tap X and you can scroll through the variations on the current vehicle. Hit C and you can open any one of its doors.



△ Better get in – the race is about to start!



△ Steal stereos to sell for extra cash! Maybe.



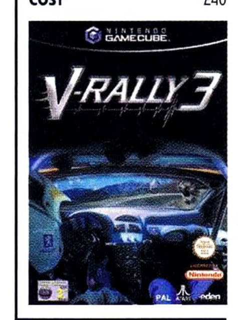
△ Some of the more animated members of the crowd. Brilliant.



△ Repair schedules are limited. Prioritise stuff like wheels, then worry about the cup holders.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ATARI
DEVELOPER	EDEN STUDIOS
RELEASE DATE	JUNE
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



V-RALLY 3

Rally Berry or Rallykissangel?

It's a looker, but there's summat very 'local' about the handling…



△ Stop for too long in the Belfast stage and Joyride Boys will have you on bricks.

Co-drivers. Hardly the greatest conversationalists in the world, are they? Not likely to crack the odd joke or ask what you watched on TV last night in between the accepted banter of "Five right… Three (zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz) left."

When it comes to *V-Rally 3*, though, the person who auditioned the guy for the English voiceovers deserves to be truck-flattened. Our advice: get the stages off pat and then switch the audio commentary to Espanol. Yes, the information may still be perfectly timed, but at least the Spanish bloke sounds like he cares about your breakneck country drive.

No doubting it, *V-Rally 3* is fast like Cheetara. The unfortunate fact is it steers like Snarf. You can improve things by picking which of the 16 cars best suits your driving style. Then there's always that boot-load of nerdish tweaks to refine your choice. But even with all this in your favour, there's no getting away from the fact that *V-Rally* is V-realistic and V-frustrating to begin with.

Accelerate and brake are nicely situated on the shoulder buttons, but it takes a while before you learn that holding either down has big consequences on your handling. It's a similar story with the analogue steering, and the combined effect leaves you feeling like you're playing a bemani title rather than driving a car. Accelerate <tap>, brakes <tap>, steer <tap, tap>… All of which would be a right pain in the tailpipe if it wasn't for the compulsion this game exerts.

> **"V-RALLY IS FAST LIKE CHEETARA. A MORE UNFORTUNATE FACT IS THAT IT STEERS LIKE SNARF"**

In the single-player V-Rally mode, everything's laid out in an office-styled/career-progression kind of way. Admittedly, there are no real names from the sport here, and only three character models to choose from, but it does the job. Test drive for a team, get signed up and then prove your worth across a full season. All well and good. But the real I-ain't-gonna-let-go-till-I'm-done-with-ya factor arrives via Time Trial. Two words. Ghost and Car. There really is very little that can match the thrill of beating the course record and then going on to thrash a spectral version of yourself. It's just a shame the road leading to this eventual skilled-up satisfaction is about as enjoyable as your average bank-holiday drive.

JONNIE BRYANT



- Ghost car!
- Twenty-four massive stages.
- Seventeen vehicles.



- Ropey camera
- 2D crowd.
- Hard to get used to.
- Cars flip too easily.



Rally Championship
SCi
NGC/78 74%
Fairly solid rallying game – does pretty much all the things it's supposed to.



7 VISUALS
Lovely car models, but trees and crowds are flat as you like.

6 SOUNDS
Solid engine noises; dullard co-driver's commentary.

5 MASTERY
Rewards are at the end of a badly maintained cobbled street.

6 LIFESPAN
Let it get under your skin and you'll race till your knuckles lock.

VERDICT
Weigh the painful procedure of besting the handling against the eventual satisfaction gained, and you'll still be short-changed.









△ If you want a decent Disney game you'll need a copy of *Kingdom Hearts*. Oh, and a PS2.



△ Don't be deceived by these colourful visuals, there's precious little fun to be had here.



△ Even the youngest of gamers will have more fun shoving broken glass into their eyes, than waste valuable minutes of their lives playing this.

DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL

The Mouse stars in a B-ball game, and Walt begins to thaw in anger…



You've pretty much got the measure of *Disney Sports Basketball* long before you even boot up the game. It's basketball, but (here's the clever bit) played using Disney characters! Incredible! How do they think this stuff up?

Obviously marketed at the 'younger' (or stupider) gamer, this B-ball game has been stripped to the bare bones. You can pass using the X- and Y-buttons, hit B to steal, and the A-button is either block or shoot. With virtually no other moves (trick shots, lay-offs, fakies, anything) available, it soon becomes unfathomably dull. *Disney Sports Basketball*'s one 'advanced' feature comes in the form of its Fever meter. Fill this up with a succession of baskets, and you'll be able to pull off a Super Move. But no matter how many times you fill the meter, the move you get is always exactly the same – cue more mind-numbing boredom.

Following in the footsteps of *Disney Sports Skateboarding*, this is another perfectly competent, yet mind-shatteringly pointless release from Konami. If you're some kind of Disney mentalist you might get a vague flicker of excitement from this. If not, stay the hell away.

RICH OWEN

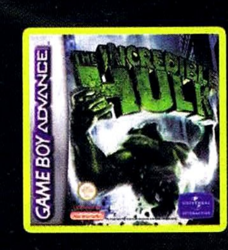
INFO BURST

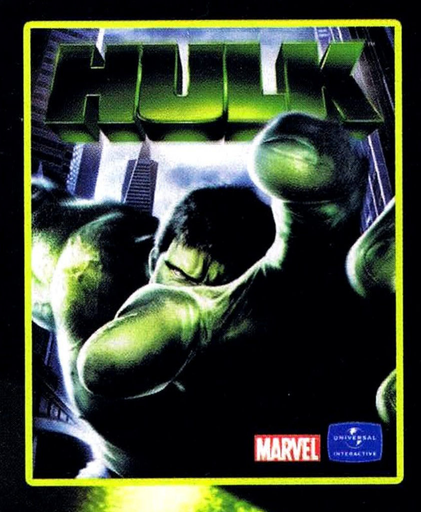
FROM	KONAMI
PLAYERS	4
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	5
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40



UNLEASH THE FURY!

Following the events of the blockbuster Universal Pictures film, troubled scientist Dr. Bruce Banner and his alter ego, The Hulk, battle The Leader, a terrifying villain intent on unleashing a relentless army of gamma creatures.





The Incredible Hulk also available on Game Boy Advance™



25 fully destructible and interactive environments – if you can see it,you can smash it.



Battle notorious classic villains and massive new foes. Fight up to 10 enemies at once.



45 devastating attacks to dispose of your enemies.



Outsmart your enemies as Dr.Bruce Banner using stealth and disguise.

PLAY THE GAME - SEE THE MOVIE

















"You take a green giant and destroy *everything*"



△ After a while, the soldiers realise what's good for them and bring out these protection shields.



△ Brucey becomes the green-eyed boy in the game's first cut-scene – very impressive these are.

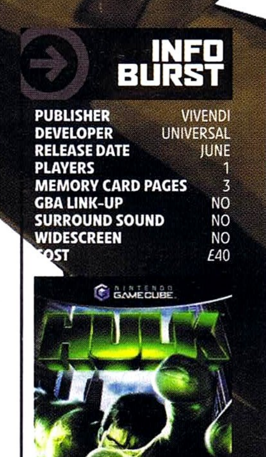
△ Yowser! The boss battles provide some welcome relief from endless armies of soldiers. You also have to look to start chaining those combos together too.

HULK

Mean green machine! Don't make him angry, eh? Oh, and don't expect your brain to get a run out in this straightforward beat-'em-up…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
DEVELOPER	UNIVERSAL
RELEASE DATE	JUNE
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



GET INTO THE GAME

Get ready for a cornucopia of cut-scenes…

SOLDIER BOY

Two things Hulk has going for it at the outset: it has a first level that acts as a tutorial; and it's phenomenally repetitive. The game launches straight into a prolonged scrap at a gas station, where the green giant is being attacked by the best the US Army can serve up. The A and B buttons will be your best friends for this – punch and jump– but as the level progresses, the game also introduces you to X and Y. X is particularly satisfying: you can use it to pick up soldiers by the neck and toss them off the side of the cliff that runs parallel to the station. Try it – their screams of anguish are nice.

METER MADE

Look out for the two meters you've got in the top left: one's a health bar, and one's a Rage meter. Fill up the Rage meter to pull off double-power moves.





While the movie version of *Hulk* may well offer some brilliantly layered family tragedy and 'interesting' questions about 'what's inside all of us', *Hulk* the game doesn't. Instead, you take a giant green man and destroy *everything* – soldiers, tanks, walls, pipes, windows, petrol pumps. If it looks like it might shatter or break – or both – just stick your fists through it.

And that's pretty much your lot.

No, really. *Hulk*, as expected, doesn't do anything remotely clever. It's a game where you use your knuckles instead of your brain, a title where everything is fair game, where walls collapse under the sheer strength of your arms, and only a few bosses and some electrified shield-things ever threaten to put you and your superhuman bulk in any kind of danger. At the time of writing, we

DID YOU KNOW? Bill Bixby, who played the renamed-for-no-real-reason Dr David Banner in the original TV series, The Incredible Hulk, also starred in the brilliant-sounding Doctor, You've Got To Be Kidding; Rex Harrison Presents Stories of Love; and How to Survive the 70s and Maybe Even Bump Into Happiness. What a career.

RAGING WAR

The top one's your health. The bottom one is your Rage meter – and that's where it all kicks off. Fill your Rage meter and suddenly things start getting interesting, as your hits count double. Useful.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

There's nothing these grunts like more than running headlong into the Hulk's fists. You can whack them far and wide, but one of the most satisfying moves has to be the throat grab, which you can follow up by dropping them off a cliff.



HITS FACTORY

When you're sticking it to them, the game lets you know what you're doing by flashing up STEAMING GREAT LETTERS. The more hits you link together, the bigger and better the payoff. Later on, as you encounter boss characters, linking together double-figured combos are absolutely essential.



MEAN 'N' GREEN

Dressed only in his trademark blue denim shorts, the Hulk moves, kicks and gets angry the easy way. His animation is neat and tidy and the way he can smash his environment is nice.

SKY'S THE LIMIT

The best thing about the world the Hulk inhabits is that he can damage it. Beyond that, there's an almost endless supply of identikit corridors and rooftops. Still, at least you know what you're getting, we suppose.

ANGRY MAN

You're introduced to the first boss, Ravage, fairly early on, and it's against this background that Hulk has to work his way through an underground silo. On the way, he breaks down doors, comes up against blue shields, and fights soldiers.

don't know whether there's any sort of resemblance between what's going on here and what's going on in Ang Lee's movie, but we'd hazard a guess that the Hulk won't be running through identical rooms filled with a seemingly endless supply of military personnel when the films hits cinema screens this summer.

"YOU CAN DESTROY EVERYTHING: SOLDIERS, TANKS, WALLS. JUST STICK YOUR FISTS THROUGH IT..."

The game starts out in a gas station in a desolate desert town where Bruce Banner stops off to wash his face and then just turns into the Hulk – or does he? Well, yes, he does – or does he? Er, yes, he does. See, Dr Banner is a very confused man: he dreams of the Hulk, and probably is the Hulk too, but where do his dreams stop and reality begin? The first level, for example, is all a bad dream – after that, as Banner gets into all sorts of trouble with radiation and gamma balls and crazy-ass scientists who want to steal his ideas, it starts to become much more of a reality. In the film, they're going to have to make sure it doesn't get too confusing. In the game, it doesn't really matter that much if it's dreams or reality – both serve up the same dish: catastrophic destruction.

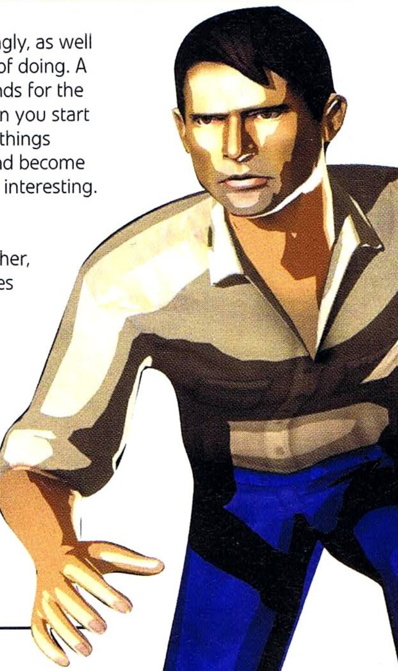
The gas station level is a good start: you get to learn the environment, which you can mash quite satisfyingly, as well as what the Hulk is capable of doing. A and B will become your friends for the first few scraps, but it's when you start to introduce X, Y and R that things begin to move on a stage and become *really* interesting. Well, quite interesting.

SMASHING!

The game's cut-scenes are truly impressive. Not only are they extremely well voiced, they're created in a strange kind of half-cel-shading, which is expertly crafted and coolly carried off. The story itself borrows plenty of elements from the forthcoming film, but is actually set after the end of the movie. So, not too much is given away while you're playing.

COMBO NATION

You can chain combos together, see. In fact, to defeat enemies who offer up just as much violence as you, it becomes essential. It's pretty easy to get the basics, though you'll have to start dealing the pain out big-style when it gets hairy later on, and that's where your ability to nail



"There is stealth but *Hitman 2* hasn't got much to worry about"

N-GC FIELD OF PLAY

A meeting with a madman. His name? Er, Madman.

FIRESTARTER

Your meeting with Madman is interesting as he is also wrapped up in a sub-plot to do with Bruce Banner's love, Betty Ross. He's a tough fighter too – get too close to him and he messes you up a treat with his fire-breathing hands. Nice dental work he's got too.

MACHINE HEAD

A good example of using the level for more than walking around comes here: try ripping off pieces of this control console and bludgeoning.

△ **Stand aside, Snake! Bruce ducks and** ***creeps very slowly beneath a window.***

△ **Satisfyingly, you can pick up soldiers and chuck 'em off roofs. Goodbyeeee!**

links and chains that include projectiles comes into play. Hulk isn't just restricted to punching enemies square in the gob. He can also fire balls of green gamma that can do for small armies of soldiers and – if you chuck enough of them into the mix – the bosses, which include Ravage, Flux, Madman and Half-Life. You've also got to keep half an eye on the Rage Meter too – when it starts flashing green, your moves become twice as powerful.

In truth, while this sounds like a lot to think about, it hardly ever taxes you beyond small timing issues. The game is very forgiving in the early stages – perhaps too forgiving. We counted two occasions when there weren't enemies coming at us with one form of weapon or another, so you've got plenty of poor schleps ready to take a beating, and none of them offer up much resistance.



WHO'S THE BOSS?

There are a variety of bosses, all of whom provide a stiff challenge when it comes to face-off time. The first one you'll face is Ravage (above). The fight is preceded by a probably-too-long chase through the darkened corridors of a lab complex. After that, you come up against Half-Life, Flux, Madman and The Leader. Nice choice.

Club a soldier in the chops and he goes down like a sack of spuds. Throw one or two gamma balls their way and they clear the room quicker than Dan doing an Irish jig. Admittedly, in the latter stages, they get wise and bring shields along with them, but you just have to time your strikes better to bypass that.

ENVIRONMENTAL

For a game that's as essentially basic as this, it at least does its business with a sense of style. Graphically, the locations are solid and well mapped, and perhaps best of all, mostly destructible. There's few occasions where you can turn a wall or length of drainpipe into a pile of rubble, but you can leave a mark on pretty much every surface. Some of the walls crumble and crack, some of the doors collapse altogether, while bits of window go walkies down the sides of buildings as you launch yourself from one to the next. It's a nice touch – not really more than that, but it adds to the game because Hulk should be able to destroy things and – largely – he can.

As Bruce Banner, things are far less exciting, both visually and in terms of gameplay. Sure, these are the 'stealth elements', but they're not really. You crouch down and creep beneath a low windowsill and hide behind some crates – *Hitman 2* hasn't got much to worry about. They're also less interactive and less violent. Banner gets himself into a couple of fights but, because you can't risk cranking up his rage meter, you've got to dispatch any enemies as quickly and as efficiently as you can. If Banner gets the Rage, you fail these sections.

You can see why they've done it, though. A few moments spent away from the destructive force of the Hulk is

BRUCE ALMIGHTY

He can do a bit of everything when he's green. And mostly, it hurts…



PAIN IN THE NECK
This hurts. We'd imagine. One of Hulk's great features is the ability to pick up a puny human by the throat and then toss them a couple of hundred feet. Winner.



BIN LADEN
In this pursuit of Ravage, a bin might not seem the greatest of weapons, but Hulk can put a surprising amount of force behind everyday household items.



WHEELY HAPPY
Someone's paid good money for this motor, and Hulk's about to help them make an insurance claim. Soldiers don't know what hits 'em. What a disas-car!



RAY OF FRIGHT
This adds another dimension to the jolly green giant's array of fighting styles – gamma spreads, you see, and when gamma spreads, it tends to hurt. A lot.



△ **The numbers at the bottom are jumbled, so you have to swap them around to match them.**



△ **You can batter tank missiles back to the tank that shot them, and bullets just bounce off you.**



△ **One thing *Hulk* proves to be very good at is camera work. Considering the action is taking place within very confined spaces, the camera hardly ever glitches or gets caught on walls. A real achievement, that.**

quite welcome – and when you return to the jade giant you start to wish for something more satisfying and clever than just another level where you kick and punch until your thumbs go raw.

Trouble is, for 'satisfying and clever' in *Hulk*, read 'mind-numbing puzzles'. The first is ripped from *Resident Evil 3*, and the rest don't get much better. Matching symbols isn't a test unless you struggle to see, and later puzzles up the ante by involving your environment, which proves testing for a couple of seconds while you figure out what's going on and why you're suddenly not smashing some poor soldier's skull in.

The game's extraordinarily linear, but then so were *Streets of Rage* and *Final Fight*. Trouble is, *Streets of Rage* and *Final Fight* were entertaining us a decade ago. These days, you can put up with a couple of levels'-worth of kicking and screaming, but you quickly demand more – it's difficult to stomach the same fight in a different environment, even if the fighting is exceptionally good. And it's not exceptionally good in *Hulk*. It's sturdy and reliable, the sort of thing you could probably put up with if you'd been given it for Christmas, but at £40, it's hard to see how a fight that lasts 25 levels can possibly justify such a spend.

> **"THE STEALTH ELEMENTS INVOLVE CROUCHING DOWN AND CREEPING BELOW A WINDOWSILL – HITMAN 2 HASN'T MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT"**

Hulk's biggest problem is that it just doesn't surprise you enough. The first level starts things off and it doesn't ever manoeuvre itself away from that same template. The result – unless you really, really love using the same moves and abusing the same people over and over and over again – is that you quickly tire of it. Which is disappointing considering the efforts that have been put in here: graphically it's excellent, technically it holds together admirably considering the amount of movement and action going down, and the presentation is slick and inventive. But there's just not enough meat on the bones. Which is quite ironic considering it's the Hulk.

TIM WEAVER



SIGN OFF
If you're a fan of the Marvel comic books and have been keeping a close eye on the recent X-Men and Spider-man movies, you would have noticed a bit of name-dropping going on there. It goes on in Hulk too: cast an eye towards the sign for the roadside diner in the first level of the game and you'll see it's called Kirby – after Marvel artist Jack.



- Stylish, though old-fashioned scrapper.
- Plenty of moves.
- Slick presentation.



- Relentless fighting.
- Silly stealth sections.
- Becomes boring.
- Some slowdown.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Spider-man: The Movie
Activision
NGC/69 72%
Not perfect, but a fun superhero platform romp.





7 VISUALS
Visually, this is pretty impressive, with the Hulk particularly good.

6 SOUNDS
Excellently voiced, plus the usual array of smashing sounds.



6 MASTERY
Holds together well despite everything that's 'going down'.

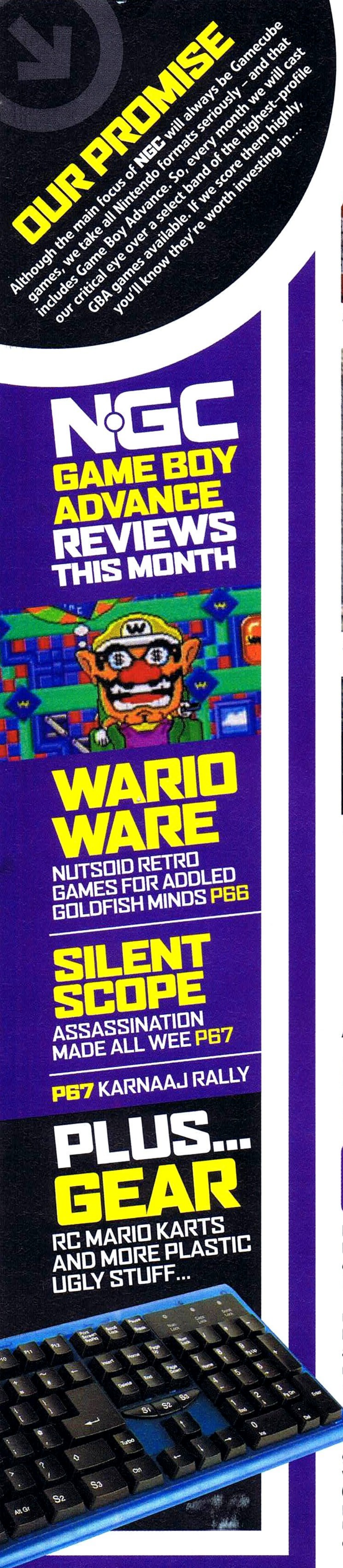
5 LIFESPAN
Questionable whether you'd ever take the time to finish it.

VERDICT
While certainly more impressive than we anticipated it being, *Hulk* is still a basic, if surprisingly slick, fighting game. Not bad – but not great.





DID YOU KNOW? Another famous Hulk, 'Hollywood' Hulk Hogan, made his film debut in Rocky III as Thunderlips. He followed it up with the frankly brilliant Raiders of the Lost Code.







△ The backgrounds, as always, are superbly detailed and well drawn.

△ Most enemies you encounter are pretty much what you'd expect. Others, such as the eye-with-a-tail, are just plain rubbish.



△ Give us a break! They're really struggling for places to find castles.




△ Frequent save points make this very handheld-friendly.



CASTLEVANIA ARIA OF SORROW

Let there be light! At last, a *Castlevania* game that doesn't require eye-bruising levels of squintery…



Metroid Fusion aside, the *Castlevania* series is as good as side-scrolling action-adventures are likely to get. Granted, *Aria of Sorrow* is hardly a massive departure from the likes of *Harmony of Dissonance*, but in comparison to something like this month's *Wolverine's Revenge*, it's streets ahead.

Once again, you're up against old pointy-toothed Drac. This time, his castle has been hidden away inside an eclipse. That's right, an eclipse. Someone at Konami is fast running out of ideas. Anyway, the stupid story aside, you're stuck at the beginning of the castle with a friend to save and the option to push forward into danger.

Unlike Juste Belmont from the last game, you don't have a whip. The only weapon available initially is a magic spear (that uses up your magic meter), and a poxy penknife. Which means upgrading is the order of the day. Killing enemies not only adds experience to your meter (allowing you to level up and gain strength), but you also have the power to absorb enemies' abilities. These can range from spinning axes, water pistols and ghosts that attack evil spirits. Three ability types – your Soul Set – can be equipped at any one time to enhance your skills, whether for attack, defence, increased agility and so on. You can also boost your attacking options by grabbing the various weapons lying around.

> "THIS TIME, THE CASTLE HAS BEEN HIDDEN AWAY INSIDE AN ECLIPSE. THAT'S RIGHT, AN ECLIPSE"

The castle is absolutely huge and it's one freely roamable area, allowing you to retrace your steps and access areas you couldn't get to before. The only really disappointing thing about this particular *Castlevania* is the apparent lack of imagination with the game's stock enemies (the bosses are still frighteningly good) and the lack of depth to the items. The first game's card-based power-up system was much better, and more involving.

Regardless, this is still your best option if you're looking for something more to get stuck into once *Fusion* is done and dusted.





△ The game begins properly when you enter a regional net-battling tournament.



△ Choosing the right chips for the job is an essential strategy to get to grips with.



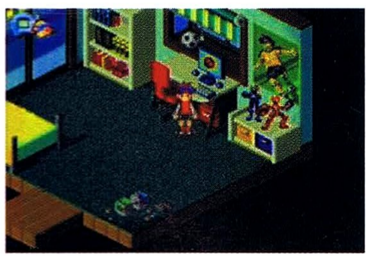
△ The environments, although basic, are quite charming. In fact, the presentation has a cheeky, rather quirky style, with cutesy, bleepy little tunes to cheer things up.

MEGA MAN
BATTLE NETWORK 3

The third interweb war for the boy in blue yields predictable results…

The third in the *Battle Network* series, this one is a *Pokémon*-style dual-cart release (in blue and white incarnations) for old Megs – one version of the game offering slightly different content from the other to encourage trading, we suppose.

If you've not played any of the *Battle Network* games before, then pay attention. The games revolve around a boy called Lan, and his mate Mega Man. Lan resides in the real world, whereas Mega Man is some kind of electronic entity who 'lives' inside Lan's digital handset – a bit like Jeff Bridges in Tron, if you like – ready to be uploaded into computers around the game world, which essentially act as the game's dungeons. As the story in the 'real world' progresses, you'll need to upload Mega Man into tougher and tougher parts of the internet to dispatch enemy viruses and bosses.



△ Lan's room. This is where you can save your game and jack into the network.

To help Megs out, you can collect 'chips', which enhance his abilities. Collecting chips and deciding which ones to take into battle is what makes the game the enjoyable strategy/action RPG it is. The battle chips come in many forms, from weapons and health and attack boosts to the ability to increase or decrease playing areas in the battles. The catch is that you can only use so many at one time, so carefully selecting which chips you're going to use is all part of the challenge.

It's easy to overlook the battle network games. They're not much to look at and it all seems pretty childish – but underneath lies a solid, quirky and enjoyable title that's well worth a look.



△ Once inside the maze-like cyber-dungeon, Mega Man takes over duties.



INFO BURST

FROM	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

79



△ Holy snikt! Once your claws are back inside you'll begin to slowly regain your lost health.

X-MEN
WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Claw blimey! It's another bog-standard platformer from Activision.





△ Using your claws sends the 'Rine into an orange-tinted rage. They also let you scale walls.



If you're not sick of generic licensed side-scrolling action platformers by now, you may want to stick this on your list. Maybe.

This time it's the turn of Wolverine, who, as you doubtless already know, suffers from a 'black spot' in his memory. This game, much like the forthcoming film, investigates his cloudy past.

There's not much here you won't have seen before. You control Wolverine, making your way from the left to the right of the screen (or sometimes right to left, if the game's feeling adventurous), hacking and slashing your way through the game's many identical enemies.

It's quite good fun for a while, and it does have some nice features. For example, Wolverine can heal himself if his claws are retracted. He's more dangerous with them out, but the more you slash with them the angrier he becomes. If his rage meter is maxed out he becomes a veritable killing machine, but the downside is he won't be able to put his claws away to heal himself for a brief period of time.

The only main problem with this game is its reliance on pixel-perfect jumping and timing – which can lead to rather frustrating deaths and unimaginative switch-and-key-finding to open doors. That aside, this is bog-standard, fairly solid side-scrolling entertainment.



△ These holographic images of Xavier work as a tutorial for the first level.



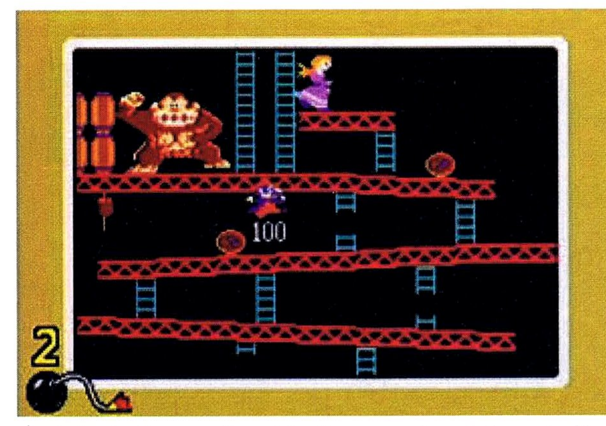
INFO BURST

FROM	ACTIVISION
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

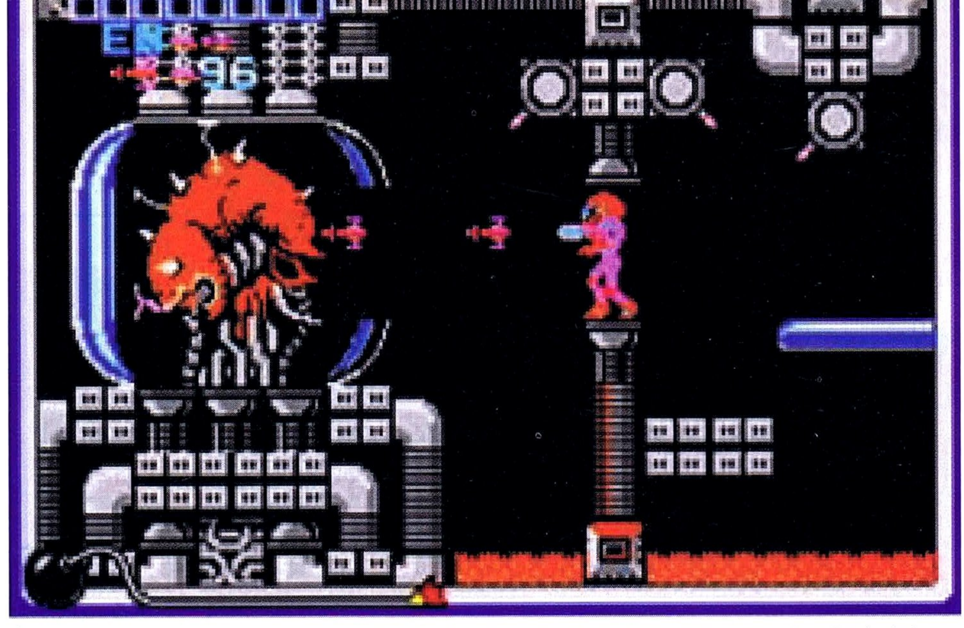
NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

66

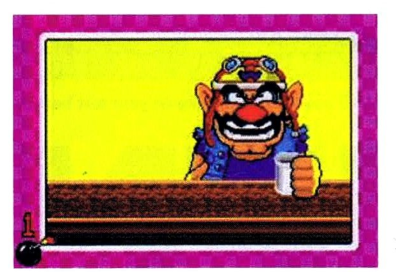
"You need to get the finger up the nostril"



△ **The harder the game, the quicker they come at you, but you should have the whole thing beaten within a week. Short, but so sweet.**



△ **The minigames require quick-fire reactions. In this instance you have to hammer missiles until mother brain is defeated, but you only have three seconds to do it. Many of the other solutions are not so easy to figure out.**

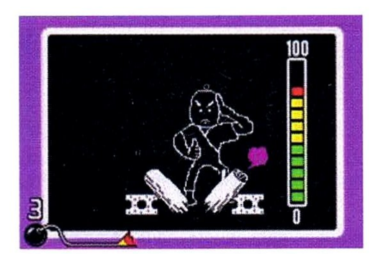


△ **Tap A at the right time and Wario will catch the beer as it slides across the bar.**

NGC STAR GAME



△ **There are loads of Nintendo classics, like *Duck Hunt* squashed into the tiny cart. *Zelda, F-Zero, Mario Bros*, Game & Watch games, and even a Virtual Boy title have been included.**



△ **Stop the power bar in the red to chop.**



△ **This is the first game in years that has had us laugh out loud at every turn.**

WARIO WARE, INC

The spawn of Nintendo and hallucinogens. GBA gets a tirade of turbo-injected minigames. And it's class.



△ **Kerr-ching! Wario finally figures out another money-making scam.**

Unlike anything you've seen before, *Wario Ware* is a collage of fast-moving three-second minigames that bombard you relentlessly within insane plot sequences. The scenarios themselves are quite amusing, ranging from a taxi ride for a mermaid to return to the sea, to ice cream-vending moped girl, who has to keep cops off her tail with banana skins on her way to work. Each scenario has a quirkily animated cut-scene that tells some kind of story, which helps tie all the minigames together.

In each scenario you have four lives, which you lose if you fail to complete one of the three-second tasks. At the end of the run of minigames is a boss encounter, which takes the form of another, slightly harder, slightly longer minigame. Finish that and you move on to the next scenario.

The best bits, of course, are the minigames themselves. They only last a few seconds each, so they're necessarily basic, stripping down gaming conventions to their bare bones. Catch a stick; hit a tennis ball; swerve round an obstacle; time a jump to perfection; shoot a moving target; align a *Tetris* block; or dodge enemies. They're the kinds of tasks you've done in hundreds of games over and over, except you've never had them presented to you in such a quick-fire fashion. It's all about using your intuition and working out what to do as quickly as possible. You see the scene – say, a nose and a moving finger – and have to quickly ascertain that you need to get the finger up the nostril. Stab A and the job is done. Move on to the next one.

> **"IT'S ALL ABOUT USING YOUR INTUITION AND WORKING OUT WHAT TO DO AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE"**

It's simple and compulsively addictive stuff. Failure is never frustrating, because the games are so basic, the experience is so quick that having another go is easy, and the desire to see whatever side-splitting oddity will turn up next is overpowering.

There are also some cracking two-player games, that you can actually play on a single GBA – making this a game you miss at your own peril.

INFO BURST

FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30





△ In each level there's a pixellated beauty to seek out. You can even shoot her if you want.



△ Night vision makes claiming those high scoring headshots quite tricky.



△ The boss characters can prove very hard to take down, requiring nerves of steel.



△ There's quite a delay between shots so making sure you hit the mark is essential.



△ This view makes moving your sight much quicker before zooming in.

SILENT SCOPE

A cheeky handheld arcade conversion that should be in your sights.

It's not going to keep you glued to your GBA for hours on end, but *Silent Scope* is still very entertaining in a quick fix kind of way. A perfect remedy for those short-yet-dull trips on public transport.

Just like its bigger console brother on PlayStation 2, sniping at hoodlums above city streets is what we are talking here. Requiring you to bring deadly, pinpoint accuracy to punishing, time-limited stages, you have to draw a bead on potential targets, before zooming in and taking out the baddies with a single bullet. Pleasingly, the game registers whereabouts you manage to hit the targets, with tricky-to-achieve headshots racking up the best scores, along with the holy grail of 100 per cent accuracy ratings.

There are also some nicely diverse mission types, too – involving, say, using your roving sniper scope to scout out terrorists in a busy apartment block. And then killing them, obviously. Then you get to take down a kidnapper as he runs across a busy football field carrying his hostage. And of course, you've got your requisite night-vision aided missions to spice things up a bit.

It's pretty tough going, and will test your basic aiming skills to their limit (we strongly suggest you use an SP for this one, by the way – it's pretty murky) and even though you'll only play it for short periods, you'll always return to it, if only to top your previous score.



△ Shooting one of these three signs will divert the course of the game.







△ Initially quite slow, the game soon picks up the pace as you progress up the ranks.



△ The tracks are all wonderfully presented, although some lack a little imagination.



△ Use your missiles sparingly, as hanging onto a lead can be very tricky indeed.



△ The 3D surroundings add a wonderful sense of depth to the courses.

KARNAAJ RALLY

YEE–HAAAW! It's some gash-darn hillbilly hootenanny racin'... Gyu'huh!



Karnaaj Rally, with its naff box art and daft name, would hardly leap of the shelf if you were looking for a decent GBA game to invest in. Which is a shame, because it's actually very good indeed.

Viewed from a top-down perspective, you race against three other mountain-dwelling, buggy-driving opponents over four laps, *Micro Machines*-style. You have a choice of three cars to begin with, ranging from slow and grippy to slippery and speedy. You also have access to mines and rockets, as well as a speed boost to help you on those straights.

It's pretty basic stuff, but it's all very well executed. The vehicles handle very nicely indeed, and the tracks themselves are stunning. And even though it's viewed from a top-down perspective, the 3D environmental features such as trees and rocks all look pretty convincing. Other sweet touches are the ability to upgrade you chosen motor over the course of a championship and, pleasingly, the opportunity to bet on races and suchlike, which provides excellent opportunities to scupper opponents and then rake in the cash from your own rigged events. And even if the cars are all pretty slow to start off with, things soon pick up.

Add a stonking multiplayer mode to the mix, and you've got yourself a nice little racer well worthy of your attention.



"You're in a drainpipe surrounded by hostile vehicles"

READY, SLEDY, GO!

The Gekko is probably the best vehicle for beginners, as it's a good all-rounder. Play any of the others, beyond the very similar Octopus, and you'll instantly find yourself in a whole world of pain. Great.

TRACK MAGIC

Here we're screaming round the curvatures of the Factory Plate. It's fast, and reasonably level, but the background visuals aren't all that fantastic. Head to the Big Tree track if you want to see something much more impressive.

BOOST BAR

You get a few seconds at the start of a race to decide whether to go for Turbo or Booster. Booster gives you a sudden jolt of slingshot-style speed, whereas Turbo allows you to sustain the power for longer.

SPECT-CAR

In Time Trial you get a spooky version of your earlier run to compete against. It's actually more satisfying than the four-player mode as the different craft just aren't that well balanced.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NDCUBE
DEVELOPER	NEC
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	22
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



TUBE SLIDER

Drainpipes. Made for rainwater, incey wincey spiders and turds. Not futuristic rocket sleds. No sir.

There's something psychotic about this game. Perhaps it's the blender-styled BPM of the eight soundtracks available, the repetitive dugger-dugger-dugger of double-caffienated dance music. Perhaps it's the chaotic eye-swipe of visuals that make six rides on Alton Tower's Nemesis seem like a cakewalk. Then again, perhaps it's the fact that the minute you start the second of the three grand prix, you'll find you want to kill, kiLL, KILL!

It's a change in temperament created by a vicious shift in difficulty. The first three tracks… A cinch. You're miles ahead, you understand that the power-ups only make you go faster – nothing more – and that there's no way of nuking the opposition out of contention. You accept this. You say fine. At this point the second series of races begin and you're floundering at the back of the pack wondering what you need to do to reclaim places. So you save your turbo for the ascents because the power of your vehicle isn't that great. Then you try to collar as many of those power-ups as you can. Then you read the manual and discover that it's all about jumps, and avoiding collisions and walls. Riight… Hold up, you're in a *fricking drainpipe*, surrounded by hostile vehicles travelling at something approaching the speed of light! And you're supposed to *avoid collisions*?

"YOU'RE EITHER ON YOUR GAME FROM THE START, OR YOU'RE DEAD. IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT"

Right about now any initial excitement starts to wane, and you realise that for all its four-way splits, unlockable vehicles (16 in total) and spread of decent courses, there just isn't enough here to hold the interest. No shortcuts, no missile launchers, no catch-up physics, and no way to redress the balance. You're either on your game from the start, or you're dead. Simple as that. To add insult to injury, there's no way of opting out of the credits once you actually beat a grand prix. So, Mr Akio Saki and Mr Masayuki Aka – see, we know your names now – get back to the drawing board, stick some guns in, not an unstructured system where you 'leech' energy off other racers, and come up with something more playable/less mental next time.

JONNIE BRYANT



- Super-slick four-way split.
- Eight hidden sleds.
- Ten fast tracks.



- Tricksy cornering.
- Leeching system?
- Dull power-ups.
- Unbalanced AI.



Extreme G 3
Acclaim
NGC/67 85%
No tubes and rubbish techno, just bikes, tracks, and tactical weaponry.



6 VISUALS
Some nice tracks. The overall look will leave you eye-happy.

5 SOUNDS
Engines growl and whine, but the music is road-drill intense.

6 MASTERY
Looks good and moves smoothly, but that's it.

3 LIFESPAN
Horrendously difficult on your tod. We're betting you'll turn it off.

VERDICT
We loved *F-Zero* on GBA, so it's a shock to find developers NDCUBE stuff this one up. Colourful, fast and bright, yes, but clever and involving it ain't.



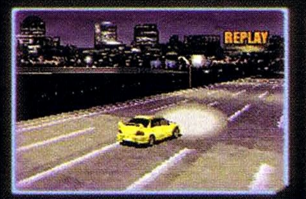


GT3 ADVANCE

PRO CONCEPT RACING

- MORE THAN 90 CARS FROM LEADING MANUFACTURERS
- UPGRADABLE PARTS
- UNLOCKABLE CARS WITH DIFFERENT ACCELERATION, TOP SPEEDS, AND HANDLING
- 46 COURSES
- HEAD-TO-HEAD RACING WITH A FRIEND
- NEW DRIFT COMBO MINIGAME

"GT ADVANCE JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER." —IGN







GAME BOY ADVANCE





FIVE FOR A PRIZE!

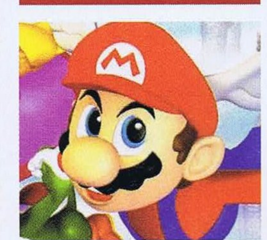
Of course, we could easily sit around all day making Top 5 lists, like crazed list-addicted John Cusack. In fact, we often do. But, as ever, we want YOU to do the work now. You've seen the format over the past few months, so send in your own Top 5 lists, accompanied by **25 words on each entry**…

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY…

TOP FIVE TACHES

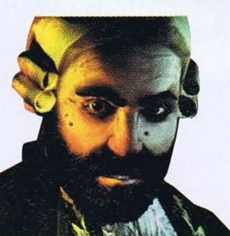
Someone whose details we have mislaid wins something really great for sending us his/her list of Top Five Moustaches. If this is you, please contact Paul Edwards to claim your prize!



MARIO



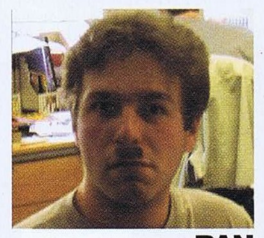
WARIO



MAXIMILLIAN ROIVAS



DR ROBOTNIK



DAN







1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97



NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

The babbling nonsense of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when "Nu Celda" finally hit the shelves. It's an interactive experience that's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some interminable sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close as 'art' and 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME

2 METROID PRIME — 97



NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

A polished, addictive, stunningly immersive adventure-cum-shooter-cum-platformer that will make you cry when it's over. Pushes the envelope in every field. Classic.

NGC STAR GAME

3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96



NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Mazza's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island put there by an evil villain. With all the intuitiveness, polished visuals, and sense of pure fun of *Mario 64*, this pushes all the right buttons.

NGC STAR GAME

4 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 92





EIDOS ■ NGC/72

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *Timesplitters 2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre. Wick!

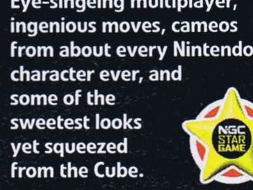
NGC STAR GAME

5 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

Eye-singeing multiplayer, ingenious moves, cameos from about every Nintendo character ever, and some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube.



6 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

Slight frame-rate problems in PAL, but *Blue Storm* is still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control.



7 BURNOUT 2 — 90



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

B2 takes the best bits of the first game – bum-clenching speed and bone-crunching collisions – and welds them onto more modes than you can eat. A brilliant series refinement.



8 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE — 90



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/78

Essentially *Gauntlet* with lots of numbers and menu screens, online *PSO* becomes an epic tale of crate-smashing, internet companionship, and fevered item collection. Blork!

NGC STAR GAME

9 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS



90



CAPCOM ■ 1-2

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll take away a chunk of your life and you won't want it back", says a man we know versed in such things. It's very good, apparently.

NGC STAR GAME

10 RESIDENT EVIL 89



CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Controls are still crap, though.

11 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils, *Eternal Darkness* replaces slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters, and a truly innovative magic system.

12 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 89



SCI ■ NGC/80

If there's no war on and you're getting withdrawal symptoms, why not try this exemplary soldier sim? Tense and teeth-gritting, with a great tactical co-op mode. Brain-based fun for those nuclear winter evenings.

13 SPLINTER CELL 89



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Starring Sam Fisher, a man with three green glowing eyeballs and powerful thigh muscles. Clanciverse stealth-fest with a gritty 'realistic' feel and the opportunity to operate various Clancy-approved hi-tech gizmos.

14 LUIGI'S MANSION 88



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

With Mazza incarcerated in a haunted house by you-know-who, brother Luigi ushered in the year of the Cube in with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's a little bit short, but still ace.

15 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/67

Ingenious update of *Marble Madness*. Chuck in a monkey *Mario Kart*, pool, golf and 'springy boxing' and you've got one of the weirdest, most wonderful GC games out there. Great stuff.

16 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Rogue Leader bolts eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky-smooth space battles to produce the most memorable – and certainly the best-looking – Star Wars game yet. Well done, Lucas.

17 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67

A no-brainer PS2 conversion, but *TH3* is so good it hardly matters. Packed with mental grinds and stunts, backed up by a mountain of hidden extras and vast skate parks – if you haven't tried *Hawk's* before, now's the time.

18 SSX TRICKY 87



EA ■ NGC/69

Has PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but still works wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, shortcuts and secrets and some mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

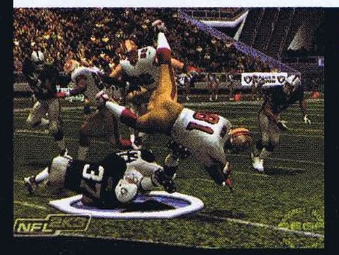
19 LOST KINGDOMS II 87



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70

CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts.

20 NFL 2K3 86



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/79

A meaty slice of gridiron sim that's a genuine threat to the towering *Madden* franchise, *NFL 2K3* has bagfuls of management roughage that doesn't detract from the gameplay. Tough as old boots, but well worth the effort.

TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS
A cute-looking turn-based strategy game it may be, but underneath is a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging masterpiece that'll hook anyone experiencing it. Frankly, one of the best games we've played.

2 METROID FUSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found here. A sprawling environment littered with baddies and an imposing difficulty level. It has a great link-up feature with *Prime* too.

3 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This slightly tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever. Stone-cold classic.

4 YOSHI'S ISLAND
Stunning level design, fiendish puzzles and secrets all topped off with some beautiful pastel-shaded visuals. Another essential 2D platformer for GBA.

5 SUPER MARIO KART ADVANCE
Much like the superb SNES original: burn around multi-coloured tracks dishing out justice with weapons.

6 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player experience.

7 BROKEN SWORD
Perfect for those long journeys. A gripping storyline, sharp, sarcastic dialogue, some sweet visuals and a more efficient control system.

8 CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
More accessible than its previous GBA outing, this is classic *'Vania*. Imaginative bosses, a steep challenge and very atmospheric.

9 BALLISTIC ECKS VS SEVER 2
Hands-down the best FPS on GBA. Technically brilliant, and both easier on the eye and more engaging than *Doom*.

10 GRADIUS ADVANCE
The best shooter on GBA, and it's doubtful many will ever get close. Classic *Gradius* gameplay, with innovative levels and fantastic bosses.

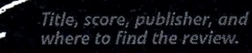
NGC DIRECTORY

Your at-a-glance guide to everything the Cube has to offer…

HOW IT ALL WORKS

A little screenshot of the game in question…

Title, score, publisher, and where to find the review.







HACKETY-HACK ■ NGC/341
When a Time Door is left carelessly ajar, Geraint reviews an FPS starring his unborn son, based on terrible events that will occur 20 years hence.

A brief outline of what to expect and whether you should consider it…

18 WHEELER PRO AMERICAN TRUCKER — 48


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/68
Drive your truck from A to B and avoid 'smokey'. A bit like *Out Run* with 'rigs', but the arcade version with the sit-in cabinet was better.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP — 30


EA ■ NGC/69
About as much fun as being told your parents have been crushed to death in a horrific car crash. And then contracting Weil's Disease.

ACE GOLF — 74


EIDOS ■ NGC/74
A highly enjoyable, relaxing sticksie-ball game that treads a pleasant middle-ground between fun and serious.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81


ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Gentle *Tony Hawk's* alterno-clone – this time you're skating around massive arenas, 'busting' tricks on a pair of them there 'roller-boots'.

ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2 — 70


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/77
Wave Race on land with bouncy farming utility vehicles. Competent enough, but there's plenty of superior racing fare out there.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80


VIVENDI ■ 1-2 ■ NGC/81
Dungeon-slashing adventurising with less numbers and beards and a special two-player flavour added to the mix. Actually quite good.

BARBARIAN — 70


VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
A button-mashing fantasy battler complete with fully-smashable arenas. Fun for a while – but it's not as good as *Smash Bros.*

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW — 15


KEMCO ■ NGC/81
Bats stars in Gamecube's most arse-clenchingly bad title to date. And it's not even funny bad. Clunky, dull, gameplay-free superheroics.

BATMAN VENGEANCE — 70


UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Cel-shaded platforming cartoon bat-action. One of the first Cube games that came out – but it's looking pretty ropey already.

BEACH SPIKERS — 79


INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/72
Volleyball, as played on sand. Brilliantly addictive with four players, but the single-player's longevity lets the side down.

BIG AIR FREESTYLE — 28


INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/75
Yet another awful off-road bike title. The kind of game that makes you want to cry the second you've started playing. Don't bother.

BLOOD OMEN 2 LEGACY OF KAIN — 72


EIDOS ■ NGC/77
Gamecube's other undead hack-fest. After 1,000 years of slumber, evil vampire lord Kain is awake and hungry. Breakfast, anyone?

BLOOD RAYNE — 65


MAJESCO ■ NGC/79
Vampire fun. Dismember Nazis, fire a staggering array of period weaponry, and battle an *evil priest* driving an *armoured pulpit*. Yup.

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY — 74


ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Competent-enough morphing-into-animals fighting shenanigans, but *Capcom vs SNK* and *Mortal Kombat* have since surpassed it.

BMX XXX — 48


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Childish, boring BMX game featuring pneumatically-enhanced strippers showing you their nipples. Get a girlfriend instead.

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS — 70

VIVENDI ■ NGC/76
Yet another update of the venerable arson franchise. Single-player is enjoyable if a little tedious; four-player is as addictive as it ever was.

TOP FIVE KINGS

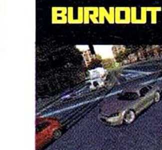
THE KING
The most sexually dangerous man of his era (unless you count Henry Kissinger), young ladies were in mortal danger from the powerful sex rays beamed from Elvis' eyes. So much so, that in 1968 the US government passed a law prohibiting anyone to provide Presley with food that wasn't made of burgers.

KING LOUIS XIV OF FRANCE
The Sun King was not noted for his modesty. Insisted that he 'was' the state, moved to Versailles, a palace that took 35,000 people 30 years to build, because he didn't like Paris, and wore gigantic wigs fashioned from solid gold simply because he could.

KING KONG
Giant love-monkey unleashed by unwitting explorers. Tragic inter-species infatuation with blonde woman the size of his thumb inevitably didn't work out, so the Kong went his own way with a sideways career move into videogames.

KING CRIMSON
Noisy progressive rock band responsible for songs such as 21st Century Schizoid Man, a pompous noodling odyssey influenced by the works of Austrian psychoanalyst Melanie Klein. Good guitar solo, though.

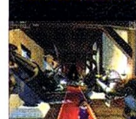
KING
Utterly forgettable pop incarnation of one-time MTV VJ and Gary Rhodes clone Paul King. Notable only for introducing brief 'craze' for emulsion-coated Dr Marten boots.

BURNOUT — 86


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
With bone-splintering, spectacular crashes and twitchy, inch-perfect handling, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO — 79


CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
A great game, but purist retro freaks will want to fork out for one of those enormous, clunky arcade sticks to get the most from it…

CASTLEWEEN — 16


WANADOO ■ 1 ■ NGC/81
Unfairly difficult dismal platforming tedium with some kind of cartoony black magic schtick going on. *Crash Bandicoot*'s idjut brother.

CEL DAMAGE — 60


EA ■ NGC/66
Silly cel-shaded car-combat game in the vein of violent Warner Bros cartoons. Far too manic and confusing for its own good.

CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX — 40


VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
One of the worst ports we've seen – and of a game that was a stinking load of crap to begin with, too! Avoid like death himself.

CRAZY TAXI — 70


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Ancient title that's so old it's now been included as one of the minigames in *GTAIII*. Creaky graphics, but still good fun.

DAKAR 2 — 79


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
Driving around in a vast expanse of dirt, all on your own, for days on end? *Dakar 2* somehow manages to make this into pretty good fun.

DARK SUMMIT — 51


THQ ■ NGC/69
Think *SSX Tricky* but with all the speed, style and entertainment removed with near-surgical precision. A waste of time.

DAVE MIRRA 2 FREESTYLE BMX — 75


ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Pornography-free moto-cross game that's actually good. Slick, smooth with big arenas – but this will only appeal to the BMX hardcore.

DEFENDER — 50


MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Rather pointless 3D update that makes one of the hardest-core arcade classics really easy, and by extension, depressingly dull.

DIE HARD VENDETTA — 80



VIVENDI ■ NGC/74
Wear a vest and shoot holes in people who look like terrorists, so America can enjoy one more night of guiltless slumber. Sweary.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR — 26



DISNEY ■ NGC/73
A cruel form of torture as The Mouse patronises his way through this hideous 'adventure'. Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness.

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL — 69



KONAMI ■ NGC/76
Oddly enough, this isn't anywhere near as bad as you may think. It's an amusing, simple footie game, ideal for younger gamers.

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING — 64



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The Mouse and his irritating friends have a crack at busting tricks on half-pipes. Walt must be spinning in his cryogenic storage-pod by now.

DONALD DUCK GOIN' QUACKERS — 32



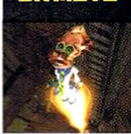
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/68
A bit like *Crash Bandicoot*, except with The Duck in charge, wearing a sailor's costume and going bthackakackthh. Also total rubbish.

DOSHIN THE GIANT — 62



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Quirky title that puts you in charge of a giant schizophrenic yellow man who must help/hinder indigenous islanders. A little short-lived.

DR MUTO — 70



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Amusing mad-doctor platforming game where you have to mutate into different animals to solve puzzles. Science is fun after all!

DRIVEN — 60



BAM ■ NGC/68
Very basic, very short game of the appalling film about driving fast in a large circle. Filling up bargain bins worldwide as we speak.

EGGO MANIA — 49



KEMCO ■ NGC/72
Rubbish take on *Tetris* that, mystifyingly, involves ovulations. Wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. Pointless in every way.

ENTER THE MATRIX — 76



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/81
Take the red pill and find out how vaguely disappointing this movie tie-in is. After all the hype we were expecting something really special.

TOP FIVE ATTACK SUBMARINES

ALFA CLASS SSN
(USSR)
Okay, so their crews hated them, and they all suffered hideous meltdowns, but they're still the fastest-ever subs, and the deepest diving. Top that!

AKULA CLASS SSN
(USSR/Russia)
The best the Russians have put to sea so far. They're catching the Americans and no mistake. (*Indeed – Ed*)

KILO CLASS SSK
(USSR/Russia; China; India; Poland; Iran; Romania; Algeria)
Quiet, handy little diesel boat easily identifiable by its lack of a dorsal rudder at the stern.

LOS ANGELES CLASS SSN
(USA)
US navy's main sub class, world-famous and now improved. Hi-tech, especially with the new BSY-1 combat system.

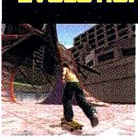
VICTOR 3 CLASS SSN
(USSR)
Of *The World Is Not Enough* fame, although the game gets it all wrong. Not sure about the film, – I'd have to watch it again.

Harry Mirfin from Planet Earth wins nothing at all until he tells us where he lives, exactly.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002 — 37

KONAMI ■ NGC/67
Winter sports game combining tiresome button-mashing antics with equally dull timing and precision exercises. Dull.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING — 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Snazzy-looking *Hawk's* clone, but then, as they said in the old Galaxy ads, why have cotton when you can have silk? Or something like that.

EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING — 23



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Fight bad guys while sliding down a mountain on a tray. Somehow even worse than *Dark Summit*. Games like these should be made illegal.

EXTREME G 3 — 85



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
A bit of an underrated gem, *XG 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, tracks, some ingenious weaponry and eye-spanking visuals.

F1 2002 — 67



EA ■ NGC/71
Rock-hard racing simulator your dad will enjoy. Also features humourless German driving robot M Schumacher version 1.0.

FIFA 2003 — 83



EA ■ NGC/75
EA finally remember how good football games are made. Actually a bit better than *ISS 2*. Need we say it's also a vast improvement?

FIREBLADE — 59



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
Nondescript brain-free helicopter game that will appeal to military memorabilia-collecting psychos and likers of bad 80s Vietnam 'movies'.

FROGGER BEYOND — 59



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The current trend of 'improving' ancient games by making them 3D taken to its most extreme conclusion. Functional gaming.

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY — 25



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
We'd be far more comfortable with this travesty if we'd had it inserted rectally. An insult to the legacy of a venerable arcade classic.

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE — 68



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/74
Lots of good stompy, building-smashing monster fun in multiplayer mode, but otherwise a little weak. Get *Smash Bros* instead.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS — 78

EA ■ NGC/75
Attractive and competent enough adaptation of Potter's film – but rather easy with it. Only die-hard speccy wizard fans need apply.

HOT WHEELS: VELOCITY X — 45



THQ ■ NGC/75
Basic racing/car-combat game based on plastic toys. Perhaps even coded in basic. Strictly for the very, very young. Or very stupid.

IKARUGA — 85



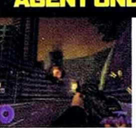
INFOGRAMES ■ 1-2 ■ NGC/80
Classically old-style shooter – originally designed for robots, now available for human consumption. *Ikaruga* is very, very, very hard.

ISS 2 — 83



KONAMI ■ NGC/68
A winning formula mystifyingly tarnished with unnecessary 'improvements'. Still good – but also a step backwards.

JAMES BOND 007 AGENT UNDER FIRE — 70



EA ■ NGC/70
Slog around workaday gameplay in off-the-peg shooter upholstery, shooting baddies with ping-pong balls. Strangely unsatisfying.

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE — 72



EA ■ NGC/75
The best Bond game on GC so far – and done with some flair – but tasty visuals can't hide an FPS that's a little lacking overall.





DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

JEDI KNIGHT II — 67



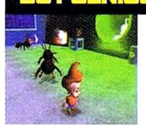
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
A seriously disappointing PC conversion of an overrated shooter. Huge game, but quite tedious. Does little to improve on *Dark Forces*.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD — 20



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
Like a horrible nightmare about doing cross-country wearing nothing but steel-wool pants and barbed-wire flip-flops.

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS — 18



THQ ■ NGC/78
Tedious, sorry, devoid-of-inspiration 'puzzle' game ('Y'know – for kids!') that actually manages to out-borify *Universal Studios*.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER — 75



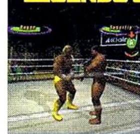
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73
Same old nutritious trick-based extreme-sports diet as usual, but this time in tubes made of water. Actually quite good fun, for a while.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 — 79



EA ■ NGC/75
If the more arcadey nature of *Rocky* doesn't sit all that well with you, then it's worth giving this face-smashing simulator a go.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING — 47



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
The gimmick of bringing back old-skool 'rasslers' is nowhere near enough to make this any good. A shambolic licensing cash-cow.



Repeat, no anchovies. Over!

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II — 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Practically the same game as above. Yet another travesty of a wrestling game, made only marginally better thanks to the likes of Big Daddy.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS — 68



EA ■ ISSUE 78
Repetitive hacking game with faint RPG overtones. Guide your man through endless levels making goblin prosciutto and orc sausages.

LOST KINGDOMS — 86



ACTIVISION ■ 1 ■ NGC/70
Collect, er, cards, and battle mythical monsters with them in pretty fantasy landscapes. The sequel does it a bit better, though.

MARIO PARTY 4 — 68



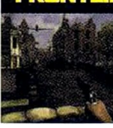
NINTENDO ■ NGC/75
Disappointing stuff. It's not bad if you're in the mood for boardgame party fun, but it's done very little to improve on the originals.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 — 70



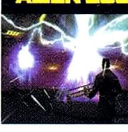
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Another decent-enough extreme sports sim. A bit slicker than *Dave Mirra*, but with smaller, tighter arenas. Does the job.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE — 74



EA ■ NGC/75
Saving Private Ryan-style FPS set during World War II. Looks rather ropey in places, but it's atmospheric and highly enjoyable.

MEN IN BLACK II ALIEN ESCAPE — 45



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/78
Rubbish off-the-peg third-person shooting game of the rubbish off-the-peg movie sequel. Did we say it was rubbish?

MICRO MACHINES — 57



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/78
Like the recipe for bread or wine gums, *Micro Machines* doesn't change much, and this iteration is certainly no exception.

MINORITY REPORT — 39



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
Astonishingly brutal third-rate ass-whupping game that takes place on the sets of a Spielberg movie. Utterly, relentlessly violent.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — 80



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The best *Kombat* yet! The spine-ripping, blood-feasting yarn finally gets the update it deserves on Gamecube. Finish him!

TOP FIVE ORGANS

LIVER
Filters all kinds of evil toxins from the crap we stuff our bodies with daily. Alcohol, arsenic, pasties – you name it, the liver filters it with nary a word of complaint. Until it suddenly explodes when you reach your 50s. The upside is the fetching yellow skin side-effect. Nice.

HEART
Probably the most important organ, due to it's handy function of pumping life-giving blood around the body, thus enabling you to walk around, breath, eat pasties, etcetera.

EYES
Round glutinous orbs set into the skull that send light signals to be processed by the brainial organ. Without these you'd be pretty screwed.

WURLITZER
Utilised mainly by 1950s seafront cinemas, where performances would be bewilderingly preluded by a man playing soothing organ music, who would silently descend into the floor at the start of the main feature. Creepy.

HAMMOND
Much the same as the Wurlitzer, but made marginally more 'rock 'n' roll' through its endorsement by 1970s prog rock beasts Emerson Lake and Palmer, who would regularly have them incinerated at the end of every performance by a troupe of majorettes dressed only in fire helmets.

MX SUPERFLY — 63

THQ ■ NGC/73
An MX game that handles like you're driving space bikes on the surface of the moon. The best of a very bad bunch, though.

MYSTIC HEROES — 71



THQ ■ NGC/75
Simplistic, repetitive 3D *Gauntlet*-style slash-'em-up that's somehow strangely entertaining and charming. Well, Geraint thinks so.

NBA 2K3 — 85



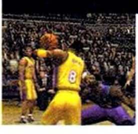
INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/79
A titan of a basketball game that puts all others to shame. Great gameplay complements a brilliantly engrossing career mode.

NBA COURTSIDE 2002 — 79



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
The second-best basketball sim available, but it's still lacking somewhat. Strictly for hardcore fans of the Ball of B.

NBA LIVE 2003 — 70



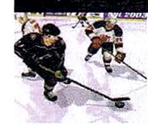
EA ■ NGC/75
The predictable common-or-garden yearly EA update. Solid gameplay; lots and lots of lovely numbers; not much different from last year.

NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT — 69



EA ■ NGC/74
Ironically slow, sluggish, speed-free racer. Yet another lazy port that's ruined what was originally a pretty entertaining franchise.

NHL 2003 — 64



EA ■ NGC/75
A more realistic approach to ice hockey which, while decent enough, isn't particularly fast or – more importantly – fun.

NHL 2K3 — 72



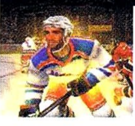
INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/80
Massively complicated ice hockey title, with stodgy and unwieldy gameplay. In a similar vein to *NFL 2K3*, but doesn't quite pull it off.

NHL HITZ 20-02 — 79



MIDWAY ■ NGC/67
Exaggerated ice hockey title in a similar vein to Midway's *Red Card*, where the sticks aren't just there for hitting the puck.

NHL HITZ 20-03 — 65



MIDWAY ■ NGC/74
Another year, another dose of frantic ice action. Still better than EA's take on the game – not much cop on the original, mind.

DIRECT

Every Gamecube g

PAC-MAN WORLD 2 — 70



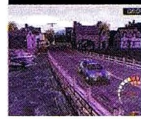
EA ■ NGC/78
The Pac is back for some hilarious retro-themed platforming fun. Shamelessly pilfers absolutely everything from *Mario 64*.

PIKMIN — 86



NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Created using textures from Shigsy's own garden. A wonderful real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetable men.

PRO RALLY 2002 — 58



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
An okay game completely and ruthlessly dragged down by its thoroughly awful, frustrating handling. Leave well alone.

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR — 48



KONAMI ■ NGC/74
The only tennis game on Gamecube so far, but with rubbish non-analogue controls and some distinctly whiffy visuals.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — 74



SCI ■ NGC/78
Surprisingly solid, does nearly all the things a rallying game should. Should do the job until *Colin McCrae* finally sees the light of day.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC — 84



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78
The limbless floppy-haired French Freak™ has the last laugh with a Rayman game that, insists our correspondent, is actually good.

RED CARD 20-03 — 78



MIDWAY ■ NGC/71
Violent football game where you mince opponents with stud and fist until the meat shows. Should be called *Roy Keane's Red Card 20-03*.

REIGN OF FIRE — 59



BAM ■ NGC/76
A poor game of an equally poor film, even if you do get to burn stuff. Some nice ideas ruined by dodgy physics and controls.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85



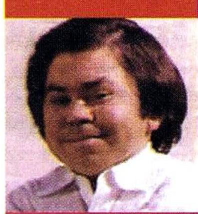
CAPCOM ■ 1 ■ NGC/78
Resi Zero ditches the old solo formula for a two-character system. Great set-pieces, looks lovely… it's more *Resi*, basically.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 — 62



CAPCOM ■ 1 ■ NGC/81
Experience the shambling, undead terror of original PSone graphics! Revisit Leon, Claire and their blocky unwashed friends for just… £30?!

TOP FIVE MOVIE MIDGETS



DAVID RAPPAPORT
Diminutive horse-faced actor most famous for his performance as Randall in Time Bandits. Stints on LA Law and, er, Tiswas.
IN TIME BANDITS: Yes

HERVÉ VILLECHAIZE
Christopher Lee's compact manservant in The Man With The Golden Gun. Villechaize got stuffed in a suitcase by Roger Moore while attempting to interrupt obligatory end-of-movie coitus.
IN TIME BANDITS: No

GARY COLEMAN
Classic is-he-isn't-he a shortarse performance on Diff'rent Strokes. Once punched a woman in the head on a bus for asking for his autograph.
IN TIME BANDITS: No

KENNY BAKER
The only actor to appear in all five Star Wars movies to date. Baker was responsible for driving the R2-D2 device, the interior of which he plastered with pictures of pretty ladies to help eradicate tedium.
IN TIME BANDITS: Yes

SHIRLEY TEMPLE
Not actually a dwarf, but of small stature during the majority of her acting career, and hence in this list.
IN TIME BANDITS: No

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS — 65



CAPCOM ■ 1 ■ NGC/ 81
Braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa aaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnn nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn sssssssssssssssssssssss! Etcetera.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY — 77



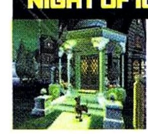
TDK ■ NGC/77
Stompy king-size robots go to war in the game of the crazy Japanese cartoon franchise. Not bad at all, as far as stompy robot games go.

ROCKY — 78



RAGE ■ NGC/74
A solid fighter where you guide Rockys one through five to punching greatness. Great two-player, loads of unlockable extras.

SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS! — 36



THQ ■ NGC/74
Platforming non-action that will hold your interest no longer than half an hour, or until you need to go to the toilet; whichever comes first.

THE SCORPION KING — 30



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Bad. Very bad. Guide a poor approximation of The Rock around and hit bad guys over and over until they bleed from the eyeholes.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM — 67



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/74
Another cartoonish footie game with a major interest in violence and OTT moves. Cracking in multiplayer – poor on your own.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE — 52



EA ■ NGC/68
A really quite bad *Crazy Taxi* rip-off, with various Simpsons characters bolted on, spewing repetitive 'funny' one-liners.

THE SIMS — 81



EA ■ NGC/79
Highly addictive people simulating comes to the Cube. A great sense of humour and endless potential for interior decoration and/or mischief.

SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES — 78



ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73
Impressive, hee-uge landscapes and fast-paced 'racing' in buggies and jeeps are let down by repetitive gameplay and awful robot music.

SPY HUNTER — 55



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
Appalling frame-rate, nasty course design and dull linear racing make this one to avoid. Yet another pointless, crappy remake.



Audrey Hepburn? Do you think so?



DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY 40



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Much like *Crash Bandicoot*, this is another shoddy port of a game that was never really much fun in the first place.

STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
The panting, pot-bellied, totally rubbish space-assassin gets the *Tomb Raider* treatment in this distinctly average game.

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS 71



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Enjoyable *Battlezone*-style tank blaster set around Episode II – not quite as good as *Rogue Leader*, but still fun all the same.

STARFOX ADVENTURES 72



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Disappointing adventure that's way too easy and linear. Not awful, but should have been far better. Hardly a fitting send-off for Rare, either.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS 25



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/76
One of the most technically inept games we've ever played. Clancy says bury the copies in the Arizona desert before anyone notices.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE 70



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/67
Sega's annoying mascot on Gamecube, now with an extra dimension added for some reason. Does anyone care anymore?

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION 70



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/79
If you have a hopeless retro arcade problem, you could do worse: seven Sonic games on one disc, accurate down to even the loading times!

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE 72



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69
Dodgy control and camera issues are the only problems with this enjoyable platform adventure. Voiced by the original cast, too.

SUMMONER A GODDESS REBORN 68



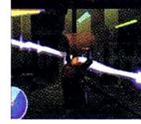
THQ ■ NGC/79
As much levelling-up and numbers floating out of people's heads that you can eat. Crappy visuals, but a sprawling, engrossing adventure.

SUPER BUBBLE POP 65



JALECO ■ NGC/78
Kind of *Tetris*-y flavoured *Bust-a-Move* for the Sunny Delight generation, with chemically-induced visuals and music. Wick.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS 60



INFOGRAMES ■ 1 ■ NGC/81
Supes redeems himself somewhat with this serviceable, stylised and, most importantly, maze-free effort based on the animated cartoons.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 82



INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/78
The apes are back with levels even harder of core, and a mental new story mode involving love, betrayal and heinous banana-theft.

TARZAN FREERIDE 59



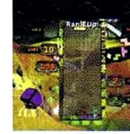
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Disney. Platformer. Do we really need to say any more? Workaday, jungle-based gameplay with the Seventh Earl of Greystoke.

TAZ WANTED 52



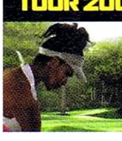
INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/72
Some of the worst level design we've ever seen in this middling, frustrating cel-shaded *Mario*-wannabe platformer.

TETRIS WORLDS 38



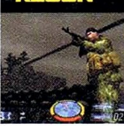
THQ ■ NGC/73
THQ manage to ruin one of the Best Games Ever by trying to make it 'better'. Again. Will anyone stop these people before it's too late?

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 82



EA ■ NGC/75
The world most efficient golf robot gets his own game. Actually really good, in a surprisingly arcadey way. Nice graphics, too.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON 66



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/79
Clancy has yet another go at squad-based tactical ops, and this time things run a little bit more smoothly. Entertaining stuff.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 85



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
No time limits (hurrah!) and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas in *TH4* – a well-tweaked fourquel.

TOP ANGLER 35



XICAT ■ 1 ■ NGC/81
Generic fishing game, predictably involving bass, that doesn't even get the basics of its limited genre right. Somewhat tiresome.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES 71



VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
Tail-riding, wingman-being movie-based flyboy antics. GC's only flight 'sim' – pretty challenging, but we recommend you try it first.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK

BOOKS
"Read a book from the middle onwards. That way, if you get to the end and wish there was more… there is!"

'NU METAL'
"Linkin Park, eh? as much as I like 'em, I can't help thinking they're just Bon Jovi with a scratch DJ and Wolf Marshall's Faith No More songbook."

WISDOM
"Wisdom sometimes comes from the mouths of fools, but most of the time it's just crap."

DREAMS
"Have you ever been sat on the bog and thought: 'Oh my god! What if I'm asleep, and this is a dream? If it is, I just crapped the bed!' Puts you right off your stroke, I can tell you."

RHYMING SLANG
"Use three words instead of one, and everybody still hasn't the faintest idea what you're on about. It's an utter waste of syllables – a bunch o' Khyber, if you will."

TUROK EVOLUTION 71

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/73
Relatively disappointing dino-hunting FPS sequel. Not as bad as *Turok 3* on the N64, but serious niggles let the series down badly.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 60



EA ■ NGC/76
As average a platformer as you'll find, with an Antipodean twist. It's a solid example of the genre but nothing more or less.

UFC THROWDOWN 51



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/73
Highly amusing freestyle thump-fest, where you lead your oily, grunting man to victory in some vague Greek-style athletic contest.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS 24



KEMCO ■ NGC/67
Anyone who makes a game that has you picking up rubbish deserves to be shot in the kneecaps, stuffed into a suitcase and hurled into the sea.

VIRTUA STRIKER 3 V2002 55



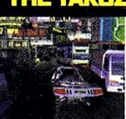
INFOGRAMES ■ NGC/69
Nice to look at, horrible to play. Rubbish AI and unwieldy controls make for a crap game of footie. Did we say it looked nice?

WORMS BLAST 63



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
Annelids go to war (again). Kinda like *Bust-a-Move* in a puzzly-action kind of way, except this isn't anywhere near as good.

WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS 51



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Drive around like a lunatic and smash up cars and everything else that gets in your way. Sub-*Burnout* road-accident nonsense.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Okay wrestler, but with nothing particularly new and a way-too-familiar engine. Still, if you must insist in buying these things…

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION 55



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Duller than dishwater. Fighting-by-numbers stuff that offers very little of interest. Total waste of a pretty cool licence, too.

ZOOCUBE 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/71
Insane puzzle game involving a rotating cube that sucks in orbiting animal parts and goes 'moo', 'oink', 'roar', 'quack' and sometimes 'wah!'



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* Well, as free as we can make 'em. You still have to pay a few pence in messages. See issue for details...

GEAR

Nothing gets us more excited than parcel after parcel of cheap moulded plastic. Here's this month's cream of the crop.

WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Well, you know when you're standing in your local game shop, dazzled by the array of gleaming peripherals and thumbing your pennies and notes with your clammy, nervous fingers? It's an indication of which item you should reach for before clutching it to your belly and presenting it to the store's cashier.

N·GC BEST BUY





BIT CHAR-G MINI RC

FROM TOMICA ● £17.50 - £45.70 ● WWW.MICRORACERS.CO.UK

Not just mini radio controlled cars, but mini radio controlled cars with *Mario Kart Super Circuit*–themed vehicles. There are special Mario and Yoshi incarnations available, along with the more regular race cars, bikes, and other diminutive RCs peddled by Microracers. Each one comes with a controller, a Mario or Yoshi kart, and a number of accessories, including banana skins, mushrooms, koopa shells and some cardboard targets to lay about the place for you to try and hit. You charge the little fellas up by attaching them to the handset for about 45 seconds and then you have two minutes of charge to play with.

They're great little machines, and – despite being a tad on the slow side – they've provided us with plenty of amusement staging 'real' *Mario Kart* races amid the effluvia on the office floor.

WORSE THAN...



MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT

FROM NINTENDO ● £30

For roughly two-thirds of the price you can actually get a copy of the GBA game. It's frighteningly good although, admittedly, after extensive bouts of play, you don't get the pleasure of seeing your dog maul Yoshi until his arm falls off.

WILLIAMS F1 GAMECUBE KIT

FROM JOYTECH ● £14.99
CONTACT 01753 496707

We reviewed the joypad – which is the centrepiece to this Gamecube kit – back in NGC/68, using words such as 'rancid', 'intriguing', and 'pixie'. We didn't like it much then, and we don't now. Still, it's not the worst pad you can buy, and we suppose it does suit the meatier-fingered gamer, but there's no escaping the fact that it feels a little cheap, not to mention terribly designed. However, you can't deny the value of the package as a whole. Joytech's memory cards, for example, are the only third-party efforts we feel happy using (we have yet to experience one corrupting), and the game case is durable and with enough space for games to make this pack worthy of consideration.

SMELLS LIKE...

IMPERIAL TIE FIGHTER PILOT
FROM WWW.EBAY.CO.UK ● £VARIABLE
Giving new peripherals a good sniffing is an essential part of the Gear testing procedure. This time our noses caught a whiff of collectable 1980s Kenner figurine.

GBA SP BELT 'UTILITIES'

FROM MAD CATZ ● £6 ● CONTACT 01908 255525

Anything that has the potential to get you mugged is not a good thing. The GBA belt clip below allows for an SP to fit snugly to your waist – although we're not entirely convinced about the wisdom of having it displayed to all and sundry. The mock-leather case (right), while a decent enough way of protecting your GBA, looks nasty, and if you clip it to your belt you are, quite frankly, asking to get kicked. Take our advice and take your business elsewhere.

WORSE THAN...

YOUR POCKET
FROM CLOTHES SHOPS ● £TWO FREE WITH EVERY PAIR OF TROUSERS
There are plenty of cases that are far more classy than this, and having your SP so exposed is never going to be a good idea. Keep it in your pocket or your bag – that way, you only have yourself to blame if it gets lost.

GAMECUBE KEYBOARD

FROM DATEL ● £19.99 ● WWW.CODEJUNKIES.COM

A 70 per cent cheaper alternative to the ASCII import is bound to go down well with the *PSO* community. The keyboard is cheap and plasticky, and it's just... a keyboard (you'll need a separate controller), but at least it works. But you can't help feel a little stung – it's really a cheap KB with a special PC-to-GC adaptor stuck on the end. Hmm.

WORSE THAN...

BARE-FACED CHEEK
FROM SPECIALIST SHOPS ● £EXTORTIONATE
It's essentially the equivalent of going to your local car dealer for a pair of windscreen wiper blades, to be told you can only have them if you buy the car they're attached to. Pah.



NGC ESSENTIALS

ACTION REPLAY
DATEL ● £30
Play all the import games you want, then hack them to pieces via a massive array of evil cheat codes. It's big and very, very clever.

PRO PAD
LOGIC3 ● £14.99
Still the best third-party controller around – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold. Lovely.

INSPIRE 2.1 SPEAKERS
CREATIVE LABS ● £35
After much deliberation, we figured that while they're not quite as good on the sound-quality front as Altec Lansing's speakers, at half the price, these offer better value.

WILLIAMS F1 RACING WHEEL
JOYTECH ● £44.99
Amazing. Not too pricey and leagues ahead of the competition. This little baby actually makes driving games even more fun than before. An essential purchase.

AFTER-BURNER
TRITON LABS ● £35
Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install, but once fitted there's no better lighting alternative to this.


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Games
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EXPERT TIPS, JAPANESE LEARNS, TRIVIA AND MORE

EXTENDED PLAY



WIND-WAKING WALKTHROUGH



FIND ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING

Heart pieces, side-quests, and all the rest of *Zelda*'s loose ends, tied up in eight packed pages. P82

WORK OF KART

Liking the look of the old *Double Dash!!*, are you? But networked *Mario Kart* is already here! P102

MAILBOX

Something been baking your noodle this month? Get it off your chest and write us a letter. P98

PLUS!

PHANTASY FORUM

Ragol riddles resolved, with the aid of a Level 44 FOmar. If that means anything to you, turn to… P108

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An affectionate poke at our bestest favourite Nintendo man, David Gosen…

NGC TELLS YOU HOW TO...

UNCOVER EVERY LAST ITEM IN...

ZELDA THE WIND WAKER





WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The latest in the *Zelda* saga in the form of a brilliantly polished interactive cartoon. Set 100 years after *Ocarina of Time*, *The Wind Waker* sees Rinkydink – well, a small elf-boy impostor in a green costume who looks a bit like The Dink – setting sail on the old briny after his little sister gets kidnapped by a giant bird. You'll never guess who's responsible... Anyway, there's no denying it's one of the best-looking games Nintendo have made, and we're quite happy to let two or three gameplay niggles (such as, say, the interminable sailing sections) go for the sake of such a work of art. It's just... so... pretty (sniff). Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhh...



WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 81!

"Forty unforgettable, spectacular hours in one of the richest, most beautiful gaming worlds ever created. If familiarity doesn't spoil the newness for you, it's going to be the best thing you've played in years."

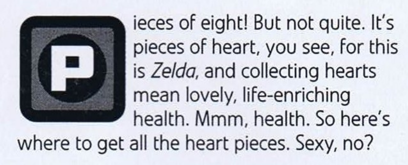








PIECES OF HEART



Pieces of eight! But not quite. It's pieces of heart, you see, for this is *Zelda*, and collecting hearts mean lovely, life-enriching health. Mmm, health. So here's where to get all the heart pieces. Sexy, no?

1 Win the mad squid-shooting game on Windfall Island.

2 Talk to the teacher on Windfall, then talk to the four kids outside. They'll challenge you to play hide-and-seek. One's behind the bomb shop, where you'll have to sidle around the left side to reach him; one's in the tree near the town gate, and will fall out if you hit the tree with a rolling attack; one's behind the gravestone by the dancing guy; and the last one's on a ledge behind the school, accessible via a very narrow wooden walkway. Find and catch all four of them to receive their respective Piece of Heart.



3 In the Forsaken Fortress, when you find the Dungeon Map, drop down from that balcony to find an empty cell. The switch that will open that door can be found in the corner of the room, behind a stack of barrels. Flip the switch and then enter the cell to find a treasure chest.

4 Check the wriggling mailbox as you leave Forest Haven with Farore's Pearl.

5 On Star Island, bomb the large rocks until you uncover a hole in the ground. Enter, and defeat all the monsters to reveal a treasure chest.

6 Take the postman's job on Dragon Roost Island to play the envelope-sorting minigame. If you can sort 25 or more envelopes within 30 seconds, you'll become a legend among postmen. Come back later, and one of the part-timers will ask you to do it again. Do so, and he'll give you a Note to Mom. Drop it into the nearest postbox and pay the postage, and you'll eventually get a Piece of Heart in the mail.

7 Atop the taller of the two Angular Isles. To climb up there, just keep an eye on the blocks, to see which of them can be pulled or shoved, and do so.

8 An undersea treasure off the coast of the larger of the two Angular Isles, as shown by Treasure Chart #15.

9 Off the coast of Crescent Moon Island, as per Treasure Chart #11.

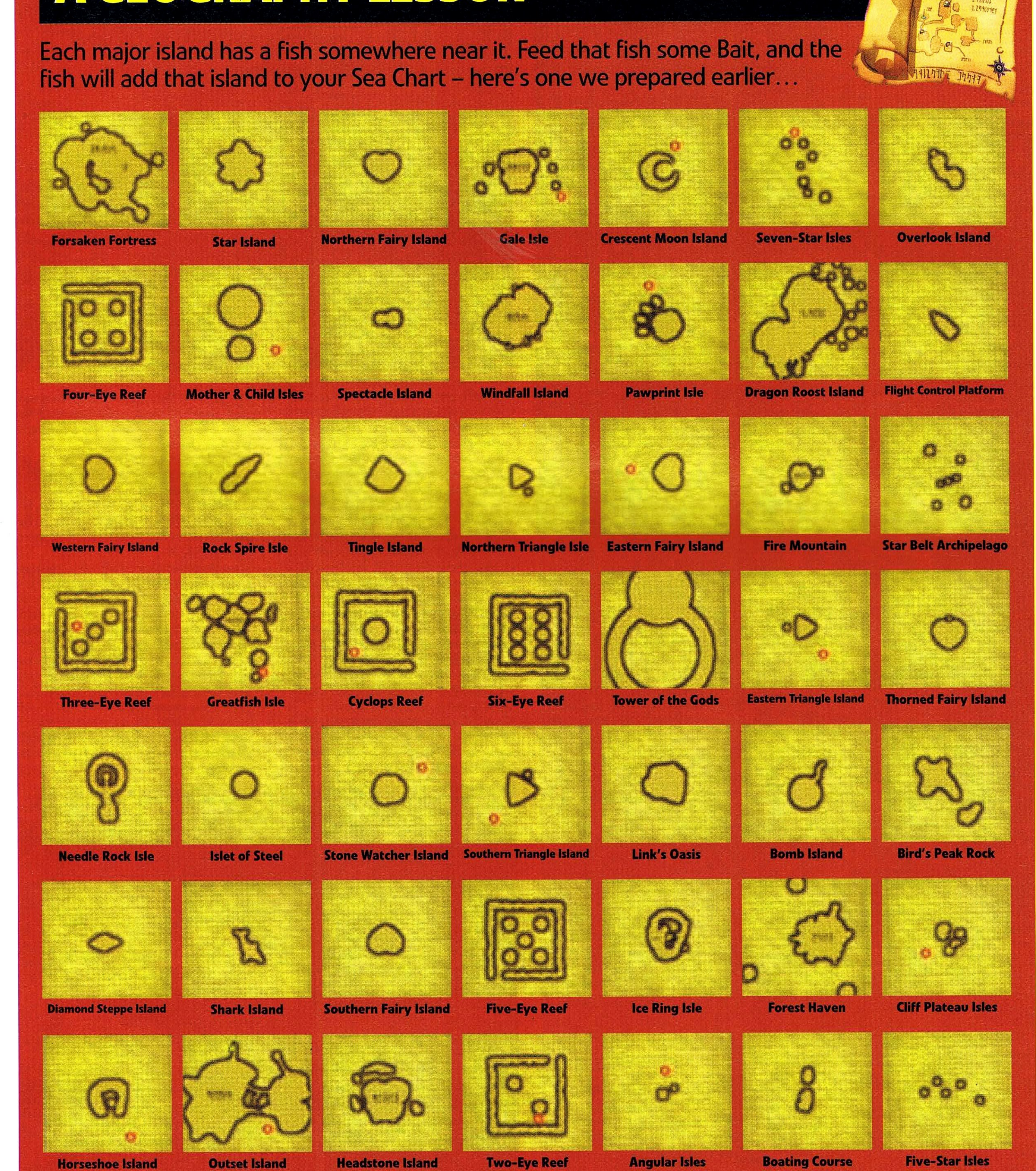
10 At the beginning of the game, you had the chance to bring Mrs Butcher three piglets in exchange for 60 rupees. If you did so, there'll be a giant black pig in her yard when you return to Outset Island later in the game. Lift the pig – you'll need the Power Bracelets – and bring it to the patch of black earth south of the lighthouse. If you throw some Bait down, the pig will dig up a Piece of Heart.

11 On Outset Island, hit Orca the weapons trainer 500 times.

12 From our difficult-but-not-impossible department: use a Hyoi Pear to take control of a seagull on Needle Rock Isle. Fly up to the top of the 'needle' and hit the switch there to turn off the flames surrounding a treasure chest on the ground. You'll probably need more than one Pear, so you can use your first seagull to draw the needle's population of evil birds down to ground level. Cue stabbity... *(Who or what is stabbity? – Ed)*

A GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Each major island has a fish somewhere near it. Feed that fish some Bait, and the fish will add that island to your Sea Chart – here's one we prepared earlier…







13 Buy a Piece for 950 rupees from the sailing shop near Rock Spire Island.

14 Visit Windfall Island at night. Circle the building that hosts the squid-shooting minigame until you see a ladder on its side. Climb it, summon a northern wind, and hit the switch to activate the Ferris wheel. Board it by leaving the minigame booth through the back door, and as your car reaches the top, nock a fire arrow and shoot it directly into the rotating horn. This will relight the lighthouse and 'decloak' the treasure chest on the sandbar directly south of Windfall.

15 After the lighthouse is lit, talk to the Ferris wheel attendant.

16 With the Deluxe Picto Box, take a colour pictograph of the pretty girl next to the squid-shooting booth. Give it to the guy in the red hat who walks around in the daytime. Two days later they'll be together in the coffee house. Speak to them.

17 On Pawprint Isle, trim the grass until you find the crawlspace in the side of the dome. Crouch and go in, drop into the hole, and prepare to massacre some Chu Chus. You'll find a Piece of Heart in a treasure chest down here.

18 Win the cannon-shooting minigame on Spectacle Island.

19 On Windfall Island at night, they hold auctions on the first floor of the rich man's house. The first auction will be for a Piece of Heart. To win, jam on the A-button until the bar at the bottom of the screen fills up, and then bid like crazy. A sure-fire method is to wait until there are only about 20 seconds left, then raise the bidding by 100 rupees or more. You'll stun the other bidders into insensibility.

20 After your second visit to the Forsaken Fortress, visit the rich man's home in Windfall Island. There's been a change of ownership. Talk to Maggie to receive the Letter to Moe, then go and post it. If you come back later on, Maggie's father will be arguing with the postman. Catch up with him in the coffee house, and he'll give you the Moblin's Letter. Go deliver it to Maggie for some comedy gold.

21 Bomb the rock on the top of Bomb Island to gain access to a short dungeon, with a Heart Piece as its prize.

22 As per Treasure Chart #20, look off the coast of Bomb Island.

23 Check Treasure Chart #23, and dredge up this Heart Piece from the coast of Diamond Steppe Island.

24 Give 20 Golden Feathers to the guard on the second floor at Dragon Roost Island. You'll later receive a Heart Piece in the mail.

25 There's a Piece in a submarine to the south of the Five-Star Isles, where it's heavily guarded.



26 Off the coast of the Five-Star Isles, as indicated by Treasure Chart #33.

27 Visit the fairy at the Two-Eye Reef and have your magic meter extended, then go to the Flight Control Platform and win their challenge.

28 Off the coast of Forest Haven. You'll need Treasure Chart #31.

29 Bring a flask of Forest Water to the Koroks at Cliff Plateau Isles, Private Oasis, Needle Rock Isle, Shark Island, Greatfish Isle, Mother & Child Isles, Star Isles, and the Eastern Fairy Island. You have 20 minutes, and you can't teleport. Tricky.

30 Fly a seagull to the Piece of Heart atop Headstone Island.

31 With Treasure Chart #30 in hand, you'll find this Heart Piece off the coast of the Pawprint Isle.

32 Treasure Chart #2 shows this Heart Piece as being just off the coast of the Rock Spire Isle.

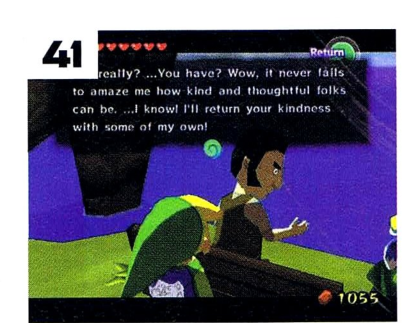
33 Destroy the cannon ships that patrol south of Rock Spire Isle, and dredge the ocean where they sank.

34 Beat the Big Octo at the Seven-Star Isles, then go fishing where it died.

35 Off the coast of the Southern Fairy Island. You need Treasure Chart #4.

36 Destroy the cannons on the platform west of Stone Watcher Island.





37 Check Treasure Chart #5, and go fishing for this Heart Piece near Thorned Fairy Island.

38 Inside Three-Eye Reef, as per Treasure Chart #38.

39 A flock of seagulls north of Tingle Island will lead you to a Big Octo. Fish where it explodes for a Heart Piece.

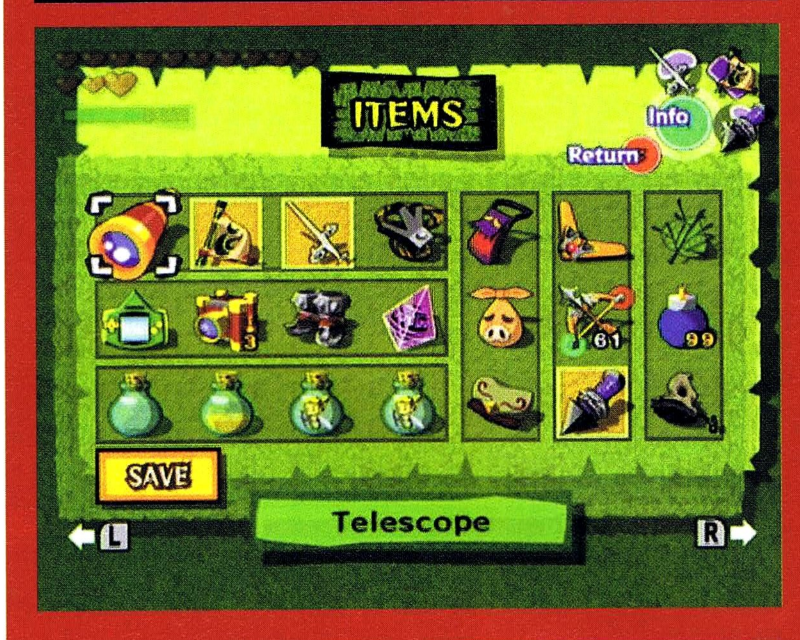
40 After you beat the Forsaken Fortress' boss, you can talk to the guy in Windfall who sold you the sail, and he'll have a business proposition for you. He'll give you the Town Flower. Trade that to the merchant on Greatfish for the Sea Flower, which in turn can be traded to the same guy for the Exotic Flower. Trade that for the Sickle Moon Flag, with the guy on Bomb Island, who'll be willing to trade that Flag for the Fountain Idol. The Idol can be traded for the Big Sale Flag, if you talk to the guy at the Mother & Child Isles, and our old buddy at Greatfish will offer a Hero's Flag in exchange for that, and a Postman Statue in exchange for *that*. Trade the Postman Statue for the Shop Guru Statue at the Mother & Child Isles, and finally, one last swap – the Guru Statue for a Piece of Heart – can be made at Greatfish.

41 Once you've begun the sidequest above, Zunari in Windfall will begin to sell the items you've traded. Buy flowers from him, and plant them in the Joy Pedestals all over town. In addition to the Pedestals on top of the city gate, outside and across the street from the auction house, and outside Zunari's shop, you can find them in the Jelly Store; the school; the rich man's house; the pictographer's shop; and the squid-shooting booth. Fill them all with flowers and talk to the man sitting on the bench by Zunari's shop.

42 And finally, if you can make it through all 50 floors of the Savage Labyrinth, a Piece of Heart is your reward. Or, in the Jap version, a measly 10 rupees.



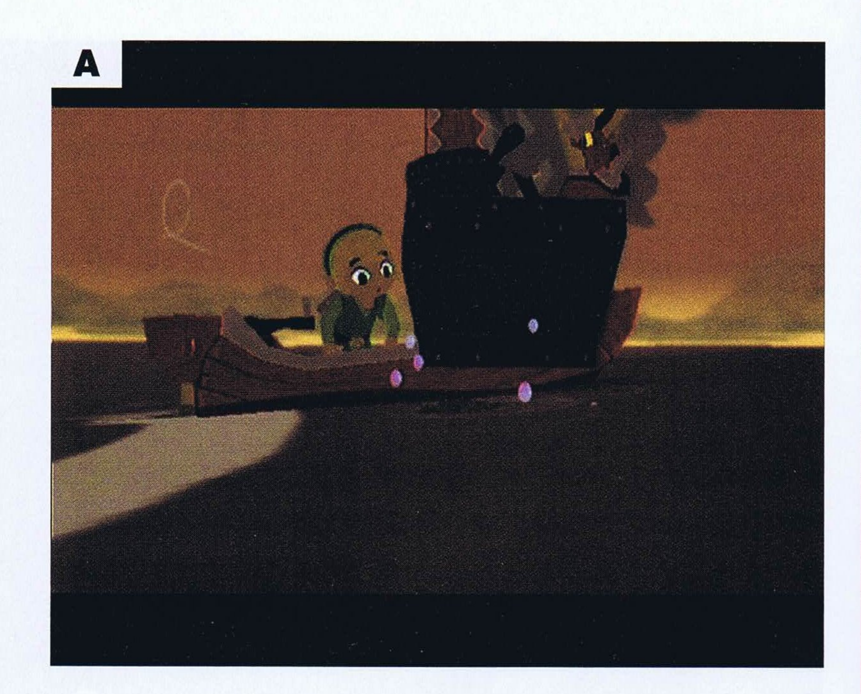
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

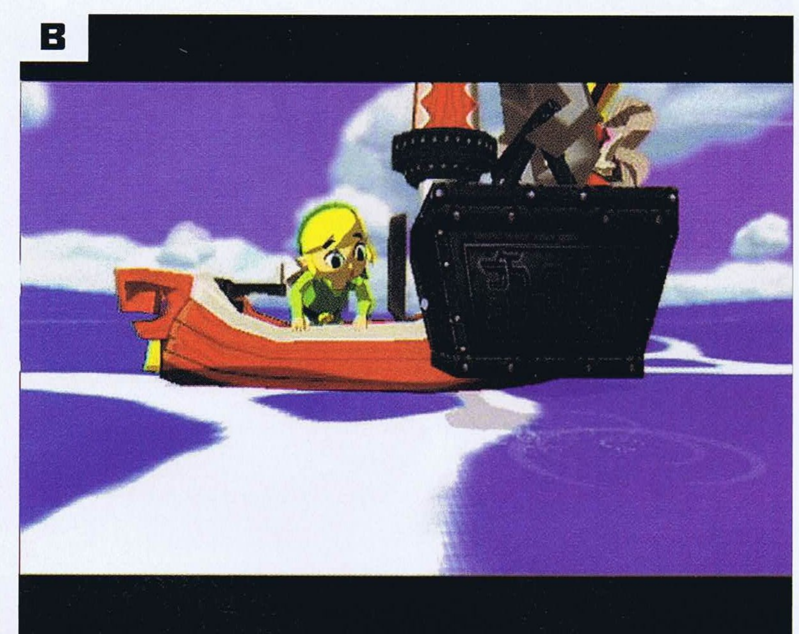






- Near the gravesite on Windfall Island, you'll find Tingle, in jail. Let him out to get the **Tingle Tuner**.
- In Tingle's cell, smash the crate to find a crawlspace. This leads to a small room containing a **Picto Box**. Bring it to the pictographer, who'll make you his apprentice after you look at all of his pictures on the second floor. Bring him snapshots of the walking guy saying hello to the pretty girl outside the squid-shooting booth; the guy in the coffee house as he freaks out (throw a pot at him first); and a man putting a letter into the post box outside the town gate.
- Once that's done, catch the pictographer a firefly from Forest Haven, and he'll give you a **Deluxe Picto Box**, which takes colour pictographs!
- After the Forsaken Fortress is cleared out, you can talk to Zunari, the guy in Windfall who sold you the sail, and he'll have a business proposition for you. He'll give you the Town Flower. Trade that to the merchant on Greatfish for the Sea Flower, which in turn can be traded to the same guy for the Exotic Flower. At any time after this, you can return to Windfall and, if you speak to him at the left side of his booth, Zunari will give you the **Magic Armour**.
- On Outset Island, bring Orca the sword trainer ten or more **Knight's Crests** to learn the Hurricane Spin sword technique. You generally find Knight's Crests after dispatching, well, knights.
- Bottle a fairy and use it on Link's granny to get two servings of **Elixir Soup**. She'll have more soup ready for you whenever you need it.
- To learn the **Song of Passing**, use the Wind Waker while you're near the dancing guy on Windfall Island. He'll attempt to demonstrate his rhythm to you: left; right; down. Play it as he dances it to learn the song, which turns night to day and day to night.
- Bring the teacher on Windfall 40 Joy Pendants to receive the **Hero's Charm**.


A


B

EMPTY BOTTLES

■ You'll receive the first bottle automatically from Medli on Dragon Roost Island.

■ The next bottle can be found inside the hold of a wrecked ship, to the southeast of Bomb Island.

■ You'll have to buy the third one for 500 rupees from the sailing shop near Rock Spire Island.

■ After your second visit to the Forsaken Fortress, you'll notice a little girl standing next to the auction house on Windfall Island at night. Talk to her, then let her run off. Loiter around for a while, making sure you stay out of sight, and eventually, you'll see the girl as she reappears and tries to break into the hooded merchant's safe. Catch her in the act – you have to touch her while she's working on the safe for this to work. In the ensuing conversation, claim to be an ally of justice, then listen to her story, and agree that it is terrible, but refuse to let her go. She'll cop a plea and then bribe you with the fourth and last bottle.







TREASURE CHARTS


Your Grappling Hook can be used to dredge the ocean floor. A number of small treasures are randomly strewn around the Great Sea **(A, B)**. Those treasures are indicated by small glowing rings on the surface of the water **(C)**, and have nothing to do with the Treasure Charts.

When you've opened a Treasure Chart (while looking at your Sea Chart, press Y, then R) and are close to the treasure it indicates, the game will flag it for you with a pillar of yellow light sticking out of the water **(D)**, which will disappear as you grow closer. You can also check out how close you are by looking at the Treasure Charts themselves. Here's where to find them all…

1 The third floor of the Forbidden Woods, all the way across from the exit door. You'll need the Boomerang to open the treasure chest it's in.

2 After your second visit to the Forsaken Fortress, gather 20 Skull Necklaces – you've beaten up at least that many Moblins, so it shouldn't be much of a problem – and go to Windfall Island. Climb the stairs next to the squid-shooting booth, take the balcony all the way to the door, go inside, and then give the Necklaces to the rich old man.

3 Off the coast of Forest Haven, on one of the tree-covered, isolated islands. You'll need to get to the highest point possible, such as one of the grappling targets, and then glide towards the Chart with the wind at your back.

4 Buy it from the sailing shop near Rock Spire Island for 900 rupees.

5 Defeat every enemy in the main shaft of the Wind Temple. You'll need to pull out a few of the statue heads on the walls with the Hookshot to get them all.

6 In the Tower of the Gods, look around the room where you find the Compass. Shoot the eye on the wall with an arrow to open a secret door.

7 Win the squid-shooting game on Windfall Island.

8 On Horseshoe Island, get onto the shallow end of the 'horseshoe,' and use the Deku Leaf to knock walnuts past the tentacles and into the holes in the ground. Do so three times to reach the other end of the island, where you'll find a hole in the ground. Beat two beetles and a butterfly.

9 There's a submarine just north of Crescent Moon Island. Go in there and beat down everyone you see until a ladder drops. Climb it.



C



D









10 On Crescent Moon Island, this Chart is in plain sight.

11 On the second floor of Dragon Roost Mountain. You'll need the Grappling Hook to swing to the treasure chest it's in.

12 The second basement of the Earth Temple. While playing with the mirrors, look for a wall that can be destroyed on the left side of the room. Doing so reveals a secret door. Go inside, shine sunlight on the crypts to activate three skeleton warriors, and destroy them for the Chart.

13 After your second jaunt through the Forsaken Fortress, destroy all the cannons and cannon boats in and around the Two-Eye Reef.

14 Kill all the rats in the submarine north of Headstone Island.

15 The basement of the Forbidden Woods. Pitch a bomb flower through the hole in the hollow stump to lay waste to the tentacle monster that's holding the chest shut.

16 There are three raised platforms to the south of the Seven-Star Isles. Invade them and destroy the wizards that live there to reveal three treasure chests, one of which contains the Chart.

17 Win the cannon-shooting minigame on Spectacle Island twice.

18 This Chart gets auctioned off on Windfall Island during the night.

19 After you destroy the giant bird at the Forsaken Fortress, go to the Four-Eye Reef and blow up all the cannons and boats. You'll need to glide for the treasure chest from the wall







31

Oooooh! That's right! That certainly is the pictograph I'm looking for! The correct answer is exactly what you've shown me: the full moon!

Next

1038

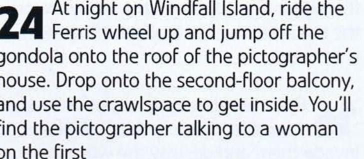
that surrounds the Reef.

20 In the room where you find the Small Key on the second floor of the Earth Temple, destroy all the pools of darkness.

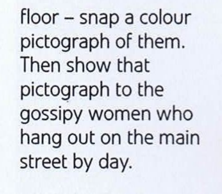
21 At the Cyclops Reef, as with Chart #19 – after the Forsaken Fortress, blow everything up, etcetera, etcetera…

22 Defeat the crew of the submarine you'll find northwest of the Northern Fairy Island.

23 On Windfall Island, break the squid-shooting record.



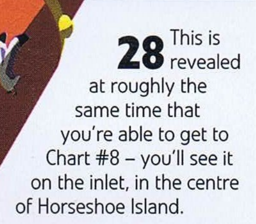
24 At night on Windfall Island, ride the Ferris wheel up and jump off the gondola onto the roof of the pictographer's house. Drop onto the second-floor balcony, and use the crawlspace to get inside. You'll find the pictographer talking to a woman on the first floor – snap a colour pictograph of them. Then show that pictograph to the gossipy women who hang out on the main street by day.



25 Hit up the Plateau Isles and run along its path until you see a hole in the ground. Drop in, and run a short gauntlet. If you passed Forest Haven, this'll be old hat, although you'll need bombs. Teleport back up to the surface to find one of the Dakars and this Chart.

26 As with Chart #s 19 and 21, head to the Six-Eye Reef, with intent to depopulate with extreme prejudice.

27 Hookshot up to the back of the Private Oasis to find this Chart in a treasure chest.



28 This is revealed at roughly the same time that you're able to get to Chart #8 – you'll see it on the inlet, in the centre of Horseshoe Island.

29 Activate the Ferris wheel on Windfall Island. As you ride it, you'll find you're able to jump from its gondola to the second-floor balcony of the pictographer's shop. Inside, you'll find two treasure chests, containing this Chart, along with a purple rupee.

30 The second floor of the Tower of the Gods. There's a weak wall at the bottom of the room, next to the counterweighted platforms. Pull out a bomb, and throw it at that wall just as it's about to go off. Inside, you'll find a mark on the floor that's sort of shaped like a throwing star. Stand on it and then play the Wind's Requiem to reveal a treasure chest.











31 Take a colour pictograph of the full moon, and then give it to the depressed man who's sitting on the stairs on Windfall Island.

32 At Three-Eye Reef, break everything as per Chart #s 19 and 21.

33 Take a colour pictograph of the vain lady standing outside the Jelly shop in Windfall, then show it to her.

34 A gang of Speedo-clad treasure hunters randomly patrol the ocean – Talk to them, and they'll hand you a Chart.

35 In the basement of the Wind Temple, behind the spikes, in the same area where you find a Small Key.

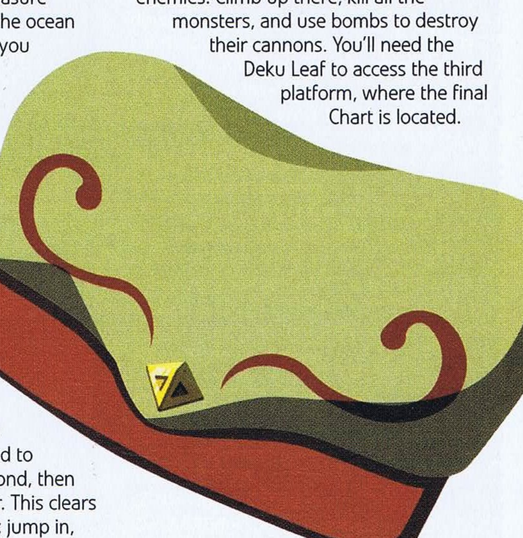
36 On the shore of Ice Ring Isle, inside a frozen treasure chest. Break it out of the ice with a well-aimed fire arrow.

37 At Rock Spire Island, climb the peak and bomb the rocks in your way. You'll need to hold the bomb until the last second, then pitch it so it detonates in mid-air. This clears the way to a hole in the ground; jump in, grab a Deku stick, and light the two unlit torches to be attacked by a veritable f—kton of bats. Destroy them all to get to the Chart.

38 Win it in the night-time auction on Windfall Island.

39 On the first floor of Dragon Roost Mountain. You'll need the Grappling Hook for this one.

40 South of the Southern Fairy Island, you'll find three platforms full of enemies. Climb up there, kill all the monsters, and use bombs to destroy their cannons. You'll need the Deku Leaf to access the third platform, where the final Chart is located.



BIG FAIRIES







There are special Fairy Fountains scattered across the world map. If you visit them, the queen fairies who live there will give you gifts to help you defeat Ganondorf.

1 Northern Fairy Island. Visit this fairy to receive a larger wallet, which is capable of carrying up to 1,000 rupees.

2 Southern Fairy Island. This fairy's gift is the ability to carry up to 60 bombs.

3 Mother and Child Island. Teleport there with the Ballad of Gales, and the Queen of All Fairies will give you the ability to use Fire and Ice Arrows.

4 Outset Island. Climb atop the eastern mooring of the suspension bridge and use the Wind's Requiem. With a western wind at your back, glide across the gap to the woods where you first met Tetra, then, aided by the Power Bracelets, lift the enormous rock you'll find there. Inside is another fairy, whose gift is the ability to carry up to 5,000 rupees.

5 Western Fairy Island. You'll need the Skull Hammer to enter, and claim a quiver that can hold up to 60 arrows.

6 Eastern Fairy Island. The Power Bracelets will allow you to move the giant rock in the entrance of the tower, so you can drop down and receive a capacity of 99 bombs.

7 Thorned Fairy Island. Hammer a few switches to lower the tentacles and allow yourself access to the fairy's room, where she'll present you with a 99-arrow quiver.

8 At the Two-Eye Reef, defeat the Big Octo that sometimes appears there. This fairy's reward takes the form of increasing the capacity of your magic meter.

NGC GUARANTEE
TIPS, CHEATS
PROBLEMS SOLVED
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED!

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



THE SIMS

ACTIVATE CHEAT MODE
Hold R and L at the main menu and then try the following codes:

UNLOCK ALL GAMES, ITEMS AND SKINS
Type **MIDAS** at the Cheat menu.

ALL ITEMS FOR FREE
Type **FREEALL** at the Cheat menu.

FIRST-PERSON VIEW
Type **FISH EYE** at the Cheat menu. Press X during the game to switch camera angles.

UNLOCK PARTY MOTEL
Type **PARTY M** at the Cheat menu.

UNLOCK PLAY THE SIMS MODE
Type **SIMS** at the Cheat menu.

IKARUGA

UNLOCK GALLERY 1
Complete Trial Mode without using any continues, or rack up a total of five hours playing time.

UNLOCK GALLERY 2
Complete the main game on any difficulty setting you like, or just play it for a total of ten hours.

UNLOCK SOUND TEST
Complete the game on Easy difficulty without using a continue or play for a total of 15 hours.

UNLOCK GAME MODE
Finish the game on Normal difficulty without using a continue, or play for a total of 20 hours.

ROCKY

UNLOCK VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING
Hold **R** and press **Right**, **Down**, **Left**, **Up**, **Left**, **L** at the main menu screen.

DOUBLE SPEED
Hold **R** and press **Down**, **Left**, **Down**, **Up** **Right**, **L** on the main menu.

MAX STATS (MOVIE MODE)
Hold **R** and press **Right**, **Down**, **Down**, **Up**, **Left**, **L** on the main menu.

MAX STATS (TOURNAMENT AND EXHIBITION MODES)
Hold **R** and press **Left**, **Up**, **Up**, **Down**, **Right**, **L** on the main menu.

DOUBLE DAMAGE
Hold **R** and press **Right**, **Down**, **Left**, **Up**, **Left**, **L** at the main menu.

UNLOCK ALL BOXERS AND VENUES
Hold **R** and press **Up**, **Down**, **Down**, **Left**, **Left**, **L** on the main menu.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

In Super Monkey Ball 2, hold the Start button and the L and R triggers to skip past the lengthy banana-collecting game during the credits.
Chris Gardiner, Wigston

SKIES OF ARCADIA

RANKING BONUSES
After getting all of the possible rankings, there are three bonuses to be achieved for eagle-eyed players:

Sky Fang This is the most powerful weapon in the game, and is sold by the Mystery Merchant.
Vigoro the Black Pirate Return to Crescent Isle to see Vigoro enjoying his new job.
Golden Hamachou A new discovery at the top of the island between Sailors' Isle and Shrine Island.

Worth seeing, right? If you're puzzled about how to attain these rankings, then here's what you need to do:

1. VYSE THE CHARISMATIC
Find every crew member.

2. VYSE THE EXTRAVAGANT
Get one million gold and all of the ship luxury items.

3. VYSE THE BATTLE LORD
Waste over 2,500 monsters. That's a whole lot of random encounter fun. You can check your running totals any time you like at Hamachou Island.

4. VYSE THE FISHER KING
Catch a total of 1,000 fish.

5. SKY BATTLE KING VYSE
Win 12 ship battles and defeat all four giant monsters.

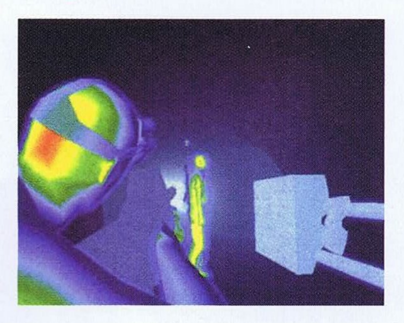
6. EXPLORATION KING VYSE
Find 88 discoveries and 90 per cent of the hidden treasure chests.

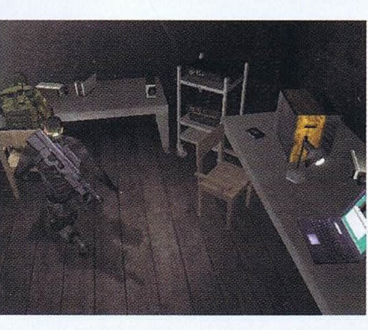
7. VYSE THE BOUNTY KING
Claim all eight bounty rewards.

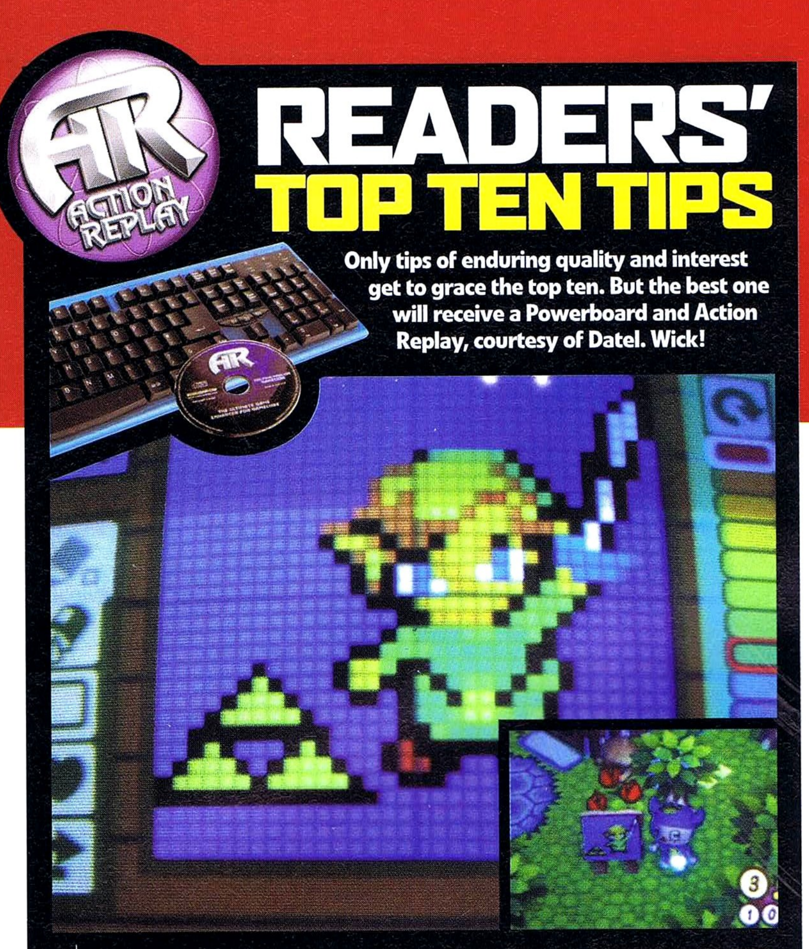
8. VYSE THE LEGEND
All discoveries, bounties, treasure chests and side stories need to be completed. Easy, right?

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

ACCESS ALL LEVELS
Does the player want to cheat? Clancy says cheating is bad. But Clancy is a benevolent deity who does not want his subjects to become vexed by frustratification. Clancy believes in truth, justice, and the right to bear arms. Clancy says cheat if you want to. You'll pay for it in the afterlife, though, when your spirit becomes one with the Clanciverse. Oh yes. Enter the following as your name to unlock all the levels: **!walk_thru!**







READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Only tips of enduring quality and interest get to grace the top ten. But the best one will receive a Powerboard and Action Replay, courtesy of Datel. Wick!

1. ANIMAL CROSSING

Rinkydink
I have enclosed some pictures of how to create a Link design for *Animal Crossing*, and what the finished product looks like. It was inspired by the pic you used in issue 77's *Zelda* GBA review.
Carl Wilkins, Wallsend

2. TIMESPLITTERS 2
Gun safety
Instead of wasting ten pistol shots on those annoying autoguns, get out your sniper rifle (or just aim real good) and shoot the little square mounted on the left-hand side of the gun. It's a camera. If they can't see you, they won't be able to shoot you.
Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes

3. SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
Fruity
To finish Yoshi's Fruit Adventure with a bit more ease, don't bother squirting the fish. Spin-jump and float to the platforms instead. You will *just* make it.
Tom Pearson, Bolton

4. 007 NIGHTFIRE
Cheat the system
On the Nightshift mission, you can't kill the people. But instead of shooting them with a tranq and having them wake up after a while, you can punch them without failing the mission, and they will die anyway.
Michael Ford, Leeds

5. TIMESPLITTERS 2
Chase me
Flaming Virus challenges giving you grief? On the nightclub's top room, or the bigger room under the balcony in the hospital, try circle-strafing the pillars. Most of the time the computer won't locate or catch you, and you can easily outrun him for the three minutes required for a platinum medal.
Janne Kaitila, Finland

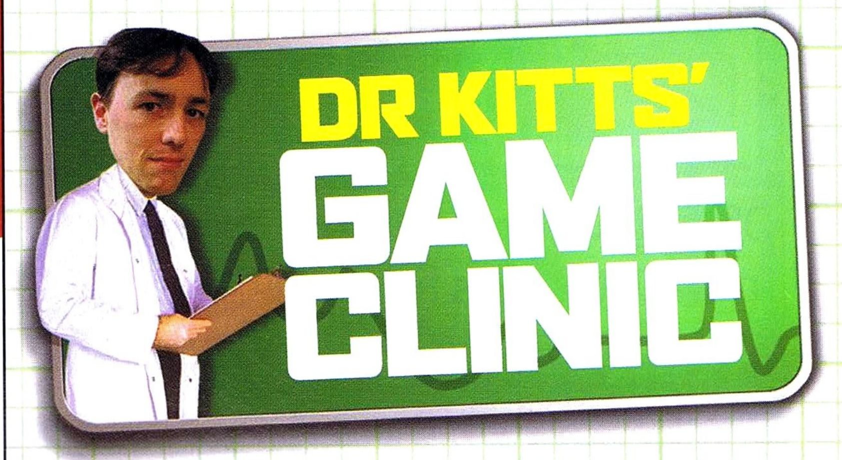
6. METROID PRIME
Re-thard
When fighting Thardus, run back and stand on the ledge at the edge of the arena. His ice attack can't get you there, and you can shoot down his rocks for extra missiles and energy.
Stuart Moore, Cockermouth

7. ETERNAL DARKNESS
Stealthy does it
Cast Reveal Invisible with the Mantorok rune to make yourself invisible.
Ian McNab, Cumbernauld

8. SUPER MONKEY BALL 2
Turbo start
At the start of Monkey Race 2, hold down on the analogue stick when the countdown begins, then press forwards and A when it says 'Go'. You should get a boost start like the other monkeys.
Marc Millgrave, West Wickham

9. TIMESPLITTERS 2
Hack's entertainment
On Neo Tokyo, don't follow the hacker. Instead, jump straight off the platform to street level. Now, avoiding all the cameras, go straight to the hacker's lair. Crouch below one of the ramps and she will walk on past, none the wiser.
Philip Erskine, Belfast

10. LUIGI'S MANSION
Boo's secret stash
Stay away from King Boo in his lair. There's loads of extra cash in the pots to the right, and the chandelier.
David Anderson, Edinburgh



Dr Kitts eats coffee mould and reports his findings in The Lancet.



Dr Kitts,
I fear I may be losing my sanity. I was doing so well on *Eternal Darkness* until I got to chapter 7, Heresy – the one with our bald friend Paul Luther. I've become stuck on a damn stupid barrier circle thing that's getting in my way. You know, the five-point spell thingy.
Ray Bentley, Hull

Dr Kitts despairs at your sheer lack of gaming talent…
This isn't hard. I'm assuming you've already played the church organ to reveal the five-point power circle. This is what you need to get rid of the 'thingy' (a damage field spell). Cast a five-point Dispel Magick spell, using the opposite alignment rune to the colour you see in the 'thingy'. If you're not sure which one this is, try each one in turn. With the correct alignment, the 'thingy' will vanish and you'll be able to get stuck at a later point in the game.

Dr Kitts,
I truly am a moron, and in need of your help. I recently bought *Eternal Darkness*, and impatiently tapped A to skip the intro page. This brought up the option 'Do you want 60Hz mode?' I clicked Yes, and began playing. Now whenever I turn on any game with a 60Hz mode, it asks me if I want to enable it. How do I get rid of this question?
James Batchelor, via email

***Dr Kitts weeps at the thought of Diddy Kong being in the new* Mario Kart.**
As far as I am aware, the question pops up if you're using a 60Hz-capable cable, such as an RGB Scart lead. It isn't the game's fault. Your Gamecube asks this question every time, just in case you happen to be using the console on a different TV. Anyway, why would you not want to use 60Hz mode? Click Yes, and be happy.

Dr Kitts,
In *Starfox Adventures*, what do I do in the darkened room at the Krazoa Palace, after completing the Test of Combat?
Sam Walker, avid gamer

Dr Kitts feels slightly unwell at the mention of that cursed game.
Turn up the brightness on your telly. That helps. Get a firefly and the fuel barrel from the start of this area, and go right as soon as you enter the dark room, up the slope, and along the catwalk. The second turning leads you to a slope back down to the other side of the room. Turn right once you're on the ground, and lob the barrel at the cracked wall ahead.



Official Action Replay codes, direct from Datel. This month… *Zelda*!





THE WIND WAKER

Master Code
1 Z50W-FZRF-T1B95
2 M5RG-R3UK-4C251

Infinite Health
1 YG9H-1435-YE6RY
2 R0N6-65AP-8KRHR

Never Drown
1 JCQ9-135G-DDN3Z
2 CM68-JYCP-B5HME

Infinite Rupees
1 32GE-RHWV-B9PXM
2 PQYD-2Y5P-ZTZ8M

Massive Link
1 9662-65U2-97WMP
2 KKFN-85HK-D0J5J
3 DPUR-NC4A-WZ9Y7
4 T0U5-AGMM-DTUXV

Tiny Link
1 XVZ8-JYQB-PZPBE
2 Y37K-M7F5-HTV2P
3 4ANR-EKYG-09VYG
4 027M-KM3X-N7CXN



Supersprint Link (Hold R)
1 RAN8-T1TX-VPGTX
2 1HUA-EQ5F-TJ9EU
3 11UF-DAKT-AC0XM

Moon Jump (Hold D-pad Up)
1 H128-F3U3-RPXKC
2 93KQ-64U8-9PW2Z
3 KZ21-VH3J-QY087

TEST ROOMS

Hold the button combo when going through doors or warping…

Test Room 1 (Hold L+Z)
1 GEYY-MQ6P-NXR30
2 5T9N-YZ29-VDTGP
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 8KYY-GEAH-QC1EC
5 FRKR-YJCE-P0H1H
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 2 (Hold L+Y)
1 Y3HC-QJ4P-F0N2Y
2 3872-BW4E-5J7UP
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 8KYY-GEAH-QC1EC
5 EQCF-KH4A-CDB8Q
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 3 (Hold L+X)
1 MAM1-6RZ6-CRPMN
2 1AY3-7HPJ-1MV3V
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 QRJM-H4Y6-CHFTX
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 4 (Hold L+A)
1 MJHA-70ZZ-29Y56
2 T1B8-KER7-0159M
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 T5Z6-PTX7-BG2MX
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 5 (Hold L + B)
1 43K4-VJK5-2WUX8
2 TZYM-AZ52-QGZZG
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 5BCR-EY02-GP8TE
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP
291.029

Test Room 6 (Hold L + D-pad Up)
1 JDCV-D8D0-0425C
2 H46X-9BX7-F5839
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 Z4GH-Q5F4-1M4HF
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 7 (Hold L + D-pad Down)
1 9DFG-AY2C-Y6REH
2 BCRH-XWBC-Q5147
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 9R31-Q80Y-JDFD0
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 8 (Hold L + D-pad Left)
1 TAM8-EMJP-8TVUP
2 TZNY-AA2J-TZK9P
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 R8UG-EKEG-NY8W9
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 9 (Hold L + D-pad Right)
1 7GFB-ZWA6-3ZYGZ
2 2EQE-HPAV-PXXZF
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 RWU6-K29B-YBBK3
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

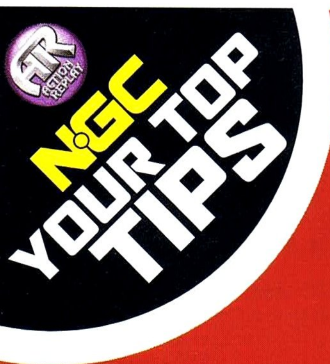
Test Room 11 (Hold L + R + Y)
1 DUW7-6K70-Z7NF1
2 QCQR-D9WB-FEA95
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 V8N8-NEX3-FVZFA
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 10 (Hold L + R + Z)
1 RK77-B53D-5P500
2 409G-JUE0-2WDQN
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 7BP7-9URB-A1RCN
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 12 (Hold L + R + X)
1 AH06-J457-E0BED
2 4ZNB-0JW3-9TGHT
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 QVH4-9X8T-4358B
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 13 (Hold L + R + A)
1 63W7-NJ0U-CKDKW
2 8E63-8RGH-21UC8
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 YQF8-UZVG-ACAHR
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

Test Room 14 (Hold L + R + B)
1 UT7Q-H9VC-NVBKY
2 KCDH-3JG2-4MZK1
3 GKGV-K0CU-QKZTQ
4 R63C-FZTN-F4B5P
5 1ANH-UAMH-EWQZX
6 E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP



YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE…

HERE'S MY TOP TIP…

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ....

Address ....

.............................Postcode.............................

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag, to bump our cash pile towards the magic 17 big ones, and our wages towards the national average.

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a luvverly prize. Good, huh? But don't send us cheat codes from the net. Quirky!





THIS IS THE LAST ONE, HONEST. THINGS ARE GOING TO BE VERY DIFFERENT ROUND HERE FROM NOW ON. VERY…

I'M THE BEST

GET READY FOR ITB 2.0

New challenges. New rules. New danger. Are you ready to sign up, punk? Well, are ya?

Good God, what have we done? What terrible new force have we spawned? I'm The Best has devloped a life of its own alright, and we're not sure we can stop it. Ripping the electrodes from its exposed brain, ITB2 has lurched out of the door to wreak its awful work upon the world. Whether this will be for good or evil purposes is difficult to ascertain at this juncture.

We won't go into the details, suffice to say that while the modus operandi of league positions and so on remains intact, the integral mechanics of ITB have been changed… irreversibly. Consider a strange amalgam of I'm The Best, Game On and Skill Club, with a special secret ingredient or three chucked in, and you'll get the gist. And if you wrote in with your ideas, great – keep doing so. New I'm The Best is designed to be flexible and ever-mutating, so it's never too late to send in your thinks.

GET SOME ACTION!

So, without further ado, and to give you a flavour of how things are going to be from now on, here are some of the games and challenges you can expect to see in the new-look leagues. Don't bother sending any times just yet – we're giving you a month to practice, see, although if you have any ideas for challenges for these or any other games, we want to know.



In the meantime, these are the initial titles we want you to beef up on. Fill your boots, as they say – WITH GAMES!





METROID PRIME
First-person shooter? Adventure-platformer? Who cares – this is gaming at its finest.

BURNOUT 2
Cause hideously expensive road accidents in the name of entertainment. JG Ballard's favourite game.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2
Monkeys keep on rolling – best get the old left-thumb muscles revved up for these challenges.

TONY HAWK'S 4
Skate to victory? Much the same as the last one of course, but one must keep with the times, so here it is.

TIMESPLITTERS 2
One of the most popular tables, this. You'll be seeing more of this sublime shooter in the coming months…

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
Mazza's game is a treasure trove of crazy challenges – another old fave still up for a good tumping.

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
Practically invented with I'm The Best in mind, how could we possibly leave this one out?

FIFA 2003
After a long absence, we've finally seen sense to reintroduce some footie challenges. This 'un'll do…

IKARUGA
Mental shooter designed for androids! Old-school arcade rivalries are back… Initials next to scores only, please.

PIKMIN
Vegetable-based challenges for the discerning Pikmin harvester.

CONFLICT DESERT STORM
How many starving Eyeracky conscripts can you 'slot' in three minutes, soldier?

SSX TRICKY
Been out for a while, but Paul still plays this. Stupid van-driving hippy. Still, the old *SSX* is an eminently league-able title and no mistake.

MEDAL OF HONOR
Jud begged us to include this one in the list. So we will. There may even be a tank level involved. Good old tanks.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION
Despite vehement protesting from Kittsy, this one's going to be in the running too. Just.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
More specifically, the Leech Hunting game – which means you'll have to have completed this.

MORTAL KOMBAT
Challenges involving spine removal and most-blood-carpeted-arenas are likely.

IMPORT CHALLENGE
SOUL CALIBUR II
This is the best beat-'em-up EVER MADE, so if you've shelled out for an import copy, we're extending an invitation for you to HAVE SOME!

I'M THE BEST

See them names? You ain't there, you ain't nuthin'…

LUIGI'S MANSION



See how many Gs you can notch up at the end of the game.

1	John Dawson, Hull	186,375,000G
2	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	185,710,000G
3	Daniel Mitchell, East Sussex	184,440,000G
4	Jamie Butters, East Sussex	184,060,000G
5	Mark Richardson, Leeds	183,575,000G



See how long it takes you to dispose of the final boss.

1	Lee Geary, Armagh	116 secs
2	Bent Eigil Sumelius, Norway	121 secs
3	Tim Wingate, Tyne & Wear	122 secs
4	Grover Mitchell, Newport	139 secs
5	Alex Gough, Rochdale	142 secs

We'll need cast-iron proof of both of these in either photographic or video form – and for the boss encounter, we'll only actually accept videos. Take a look over at the previous page for tips on how to record your triumphs.

STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER



Most kills on Battle of Endor (you must win at least a Bronze medal).

1	Adam Goodwin, Anglesey	274
2	Dave Every, Cheshire	258
3	Kevin Ibbotson, Dublin	241
4	Joe Newman, London	191
5	David Gamble, Antrim	175



Highest accuracy on Death Star Attack (video evidence only, please).

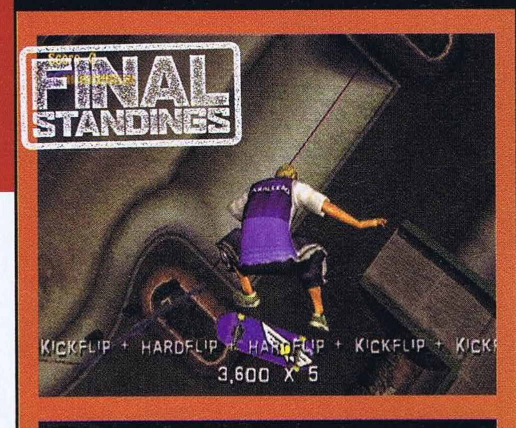
1	Kevin Ibbotson, Dublin	96%
2	Dave Every, Cheshire	94%
3	Kieran Cornwell, London	93%
4	Chris Fletcher, Stockport	86%
5	Jack Gill, Northallerton	83%

Fastest time achieved taking out the Star Destroyer in Razor Rendezvous.

1	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes	0:21
2	Simon Thomas, Solihull	0:22
3	Gavin Maidment, Surrey	0:23
=	Dave Every, Cheshire	0:23
4	Richard Dunn, Boston	0:26

Lissen up, fools. On Death Star Attack, what we don't want to see is you shooting three TIEs with homing torpedoes for 100 per cent accuracy – that's for maggots. Know what we mean? We want to see video footage of REAL skill. Pics are fine for the other two.

TONY HAWK'S 3



Highest point score on The Foundry level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	13,228,348
2	Lee Robinson, Notts	4,489,945
3	John Copeland, Co Durham	4,203,016
4	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
5	Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans	3,255,466



Highest trick combo on the Canada level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	8,195,915
2	Lee Robinson, Notts	4,489,945
3	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
4	Gary Lord, Hull	2,173,200
5	John Copeland, Co Durham	1,879,038

Highest score on the Rio level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	12,948,744
2	Daniel Rouse, High Wycombe	7,039,117
3	Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans	4,225,882
4	David Bennett, Isle of Man	4,095,129
5	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	3,786,550

Remember, Tony Hawk's 3 is blinkin' hard – maybe even harder than Advanced Calculus – which means you'll need to put in the hours. Once you have, get us your proof of the end screen in either photographic or, preferably, videographic form. Ta very much.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO... I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM



Your best race time on Aspen Lake in Normal mode.

1	Paul Holmes, Edinburgh	0'21"144
2	Richard Dunn, Boston	1'00"479
3	John Dawson, Hull	1'01"614
4	Daniel Dunn, Boston	1'01"633
5	Dave Every, Cheshire	1'00"890



Your best stunt score on Lost Temple Lagoon.

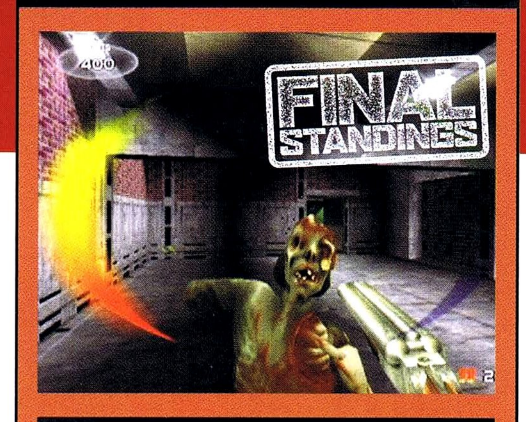
1	Richard Dunn, Boston	37,517
2	John Dawson, Hull	35,783
3	Steven Lockwood, Bradford	35,545
4	Ben Tatlow, London	33,160
5	Dave Every, Cheshire	32,094

Your best lap time on Southern Island in Normal mode.

1	John Dawson, Hull	0'16"106
2	Dave Every, Cheshire	0'16"276
3	Daniel Dunn, Boston	0'16"587
4	James Stock, Norwich	0'18"248
5	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	0'18"712

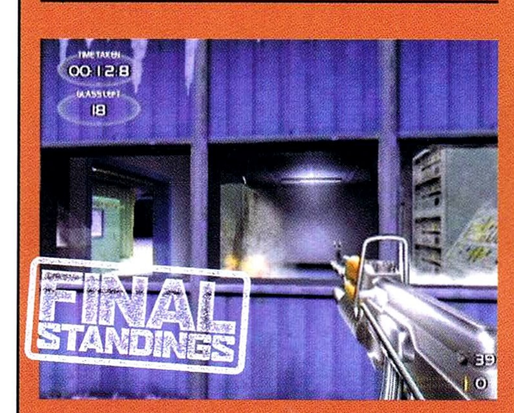
Fancy some? Again, we'll need cast-iron proof of your achievements – video is our choice medium, although we may also accept some photographic evidence, provided – of course – that it hasn't been altered or messed with in some way.

TIMESPLITTERS 2



Your highest score in the Fight Off the Living Dead challenge...

1	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes	921,950
2	Paul Marke, Southampton	608,700
3	Jason Leverett, Great Yarmouth	397,650
4	Dave Every, Cheshire	339,725
5	Gabe Harry, Hereford	296,975



Your best time in the Pane in the Neck challenge...

1	Dave Every, Cheshire	7.4 secs
2	David Gamble, Antrim	7.7 secs
3	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, M Keynes	8.2 secs
=	A M Hickling, Goole	8.2 secs
4	Will Tansley, Horsham	8.6 secs

Your best time in the Escape from Neo Tokyo challenge...

1	Jonathan Cross, Manchester	12.7 secs
2	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, M Keynes	15.7 secs
3	AM Hickling, Goole	16.0 secs
4	Jason Leverett, Great Yarmouth	16.5 secs
5	D Gamble, Antrim/A Wood, Essex	16.7 secs

The challenges in TS2 are some of the toughest around, so you'll need to keep your wits about you if you want to beat these scores, especially on the Fight Off the Living Dead challenge. A clear photo of the results screen will suffice for all three.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2



How many rings you can get at the end of the Juggernaut chase section.

1	Tim Osborne, Staffordshire	453
2	William Thomas, Shropshire	440
3	Adam Ely, Weybridge	437
4	Tom Sherwood, Cheshire	413
5	David Smith, Bothwell	379



What time you can notch up on Escape from the Military Base.

1	David Marsh, London	01:39:07
2	David Waters, Essex	01:39:14
3	Tim Osborne, Staffordshire	01:42:27
4	Tom Sherwood, Cheshire	01:42:52
5	Barry Templeton, Kilmarnock	01:43:57

Only the fastest need apply for this challenge. And we'll need video evidence for both of these beauties, too.





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I'M THE BEST

See them names? You ain't there, you ain't nuthin'…

SUPER SMASH BROS





How far can you hit the bag? We want to see your highest score in Home Run.

1	Ben Turner, Kent	974.3m
2	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes	610.2m
3	Dave Every, Cheshire	602.6m
4	John Dawson, Hull	563.5m
5	Richard Dunn, Boston	537.7m



How many juggle combo hits can you get in before your foe hits the ground?

1	John Rothwell, Wallasey	999
2	Dave Every, Cheshire	435
3	Michael Kimberley, Bishops Itchington	82
4	Ry Morgan, Moray	29
5	Tom Lyth, Manchester	25

Your quickest time in 100-Man Melee, using Mario only.

1	Richard Dunn, Boston	02:14:72
2	Gavin Maidment, Surrey	02:23:30
3	John Dawson, Hull	02:24:33
4	Dave Every, Cheshire	02:25:36
5	Aidan McGinley, Co Donegal	02:27:40

Just as there's more than one way to skin a cat, there's more than one way to smack a bag – which is why we want videoed evidence of your attempt at the first challenge. Same goes for the juggle combo challenge – although we'll accept pics for 100-man melee.

MARIO SUNSHINE



Your best time on Il Piantissimo's Sand Sprint (Gelato Beach).

1	John Dawson, Hull	10:08
2	Aaron Fielder, Glastonbury	10:15
3	Dean Hailstone, Tyne & Wear	10:35
4	Lee Geary, Armagh	10:36
5	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	10:50



Your best time in Il Piantissimo's Crazy Climb (Pianta Village).

1	Dave Every, Cheshire	16:32
2	Lee Geary, Armagh	16:43
3	Aaron Fielder, Glastonbury	16:80
=	Daniel Rouse, High Wycombe	16:80
4	Mark Williamson, Rotherham	17:87

Two timed challenges from the best Mario game since the last one – videoed evidence is, as ever, preferable, but we'll accept photos as long as they clearly show the end of each challenge with your final score displayed. You heard.



SUPER MONKEY BALL





Your fastest time on the Frozen Highway stage in Monkey Race…

1	Dave Every, Cheshire	0:51:20
2	Stephen Topple, Ipswich	0:52:40
3	John Dawson, Hull	0:53:72
4	David Smith, Bothwell	0:54:55
5	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	0:55:20



Highest score on Monkey Target (with Wheel of Danger turned off).

1	Dave Every, Cheshire	8,970
2	Pavel Sikorsky, London	6,050
3	John Dawson, Hull	5,150
4	Adam Williams, Exeter	4,380
5	Will Prendergast, Berkshire	3,020

Your fastest time on Advanced Floor 2 in the Main Game (Time Remaining).

1	Dave Every, Cheshire	54:92
2	David Smith, Bothwell	54:78
3	Michael Rothwell, Wallasey	54:73
4	John Dawson, Hull	54:56
5	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	53:08

We'll want a picture of your monkey crossing the finish line for the first challenge, but a simple picture of the results screen will suffice for the other two. And don't forget to turn the Wheel of Danger off for the second challenge – there's really no point. At all.

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30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

…right now! And please include your *name and address*. Oh, go on. Please.

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

'A clone of Jes'

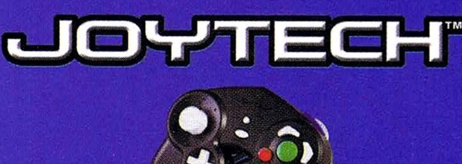
Your event-o-meters are wrong, completely and utterly. The excitement level always starts off at zero. Are you trying to tell me that when you sat down to play *Zelda*, you had the same level of anticipation as you did when *Universal Studios* was in your disc tray? Teetering on the threshold of an aircraft at 15,000ft, preparing to throw yourself into the void, is an apt way of describing the excitement when switching on *Zelda*. Though for *Universal Studios*, it is not. Why not represent this in the chart? Also, who is this 'Al Bickham'? Is he, in fact, a clone of Jes? Or is he a completely unrelated co-worker, merely another cog in your well-oiled dictatorship?



Sam Walters, Northwich

Erm… The event-o-meters always start at zero because, as veteran gamers, everyone at NGC has ice water flowing through his veins. The big surprise is that the line moves at all, when our heart rates never rise above 30 beats per minute. Ahem. Okay, we may well have to change that.

As for Al, he is indeed a clone, created so the FBI can never be sure which man they're chasing. Ed







△ A picture of the spiral staircase here would have been better, but we just got sidetracked…

'Ye olden days'

While playing on the Notre Dame level of *Timesplitters 2* recently, I noticed a glaring error that Free Radical had made – the spiral stairs are the wrong way round! In castles, spiral staircases are made so that they spiral clockwise, with the central column on your right as you go up. The reason for this is that in ye olden days, if ever the castles were attacked, the mostly right-handed defenders, who would be at the top of the stairs, would be able to take big hacks with their sword at whoever might be invading, and the invaders' swords would be impeded by the big stone column next to them. It's so obvious! They should have known better. Perhaps this could be sorted out in *Timesplitters 3*.

Joe Ormrod, Blackpool

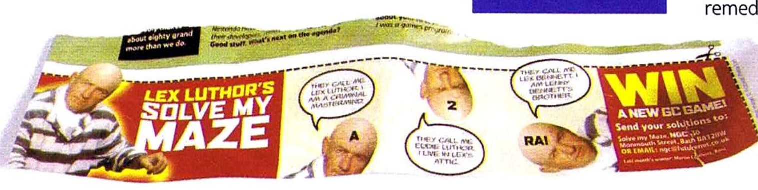
Those fools – how could they have missed something so simple? Interestingly, the stairs in Jud's fortress are similarly designed, so he can shoot at unwelcome visitors while staying in comfortingly close proximity to his life-size rubber model of George W Bush. Ed

'A total eejit'

Lex Luthor's Solve My Maze was possibly the best part of the mag, and now it's gone! I don't know if you understand the importance of Lex. My login name on internet forums is Lex Luthor. My name on *Timesplitters 2* is Lex Luthor. I *am* Lex Luthor. When my friends come to my house, they pick up **NGC** and flick straight through to Solve My Maze. I demand you bring him back. Without him I look like a stupid Superman fan. And a total eejit.

Daniel O'Sullivan, Surrey

Not only did Lex outstay his welcome, our licence to use his image also ran out. So we had him killed. If any other readers care as passionately as Daniel, send us some cash and we'll attempt to get him resurrected. Of course, we can't guarantee we won't just spend the money on biscuits. In fact, we probably will. Ed



Bonus Letters

Blimey, I saw Mario, on a kart. It seemed Nintendo slipped out some gold!
Wesley Mackinder, Sleaford
And pinched off some silver too. Ed

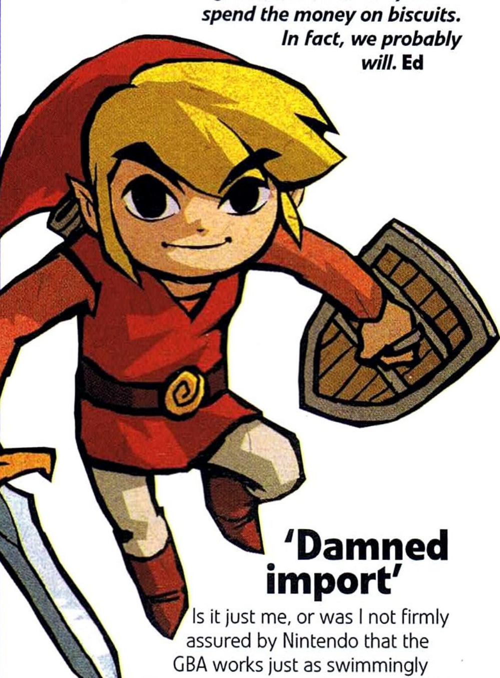
The surplus array of jumps is actually better suited to the fat man than a talking nosel-necked novelty canteen.
Paul Canham, Clayhanger
Nosel? Ed

Why do you want my address? I will give it to you if you tell me why.
Jon Perry, via email
So we can put something more interesting than 'via email' after your name. Ed

We all wish we could marry Peach. But that's Mario's bit of fluff.
Dean Hailstone, Jarrow
Indeed. Ed

Outlaw Golf is pointless. As if outlaws would play golf.
Adam Parker, Chester
Nicely observed. Ed

Do you have a problem with Sonic?
Victoria Paterson, Motherwell
No, but I have a problem with my shotgun licence renewal. Damn those meddling do-gooders. Ed



'Damned import'

Is it just me, or was I not firmly assured by Nintendo that the GBA works just as swimmingly with import games as it does with UK ones? I tried linking my US import *Link to the Past/Four Swords* to my friend's UK version, and we repeatedly got the message 'connection error, please reconnect'. No matter what we tried, this is the message we always got, and we were forced to conclude that it was because my version is imported. Now, why is this causing problems? I thought they were compatible, else I wouldn't have bought the damned import one in the first place. It also springs to mind that *Wind Waker* uses connection features – am I going to have problems? If I am, this reflects extreme incompetence on the part of Nintendo. A warning should have been issued somewhere that the connection between versions is not up to scratch. Can you suggest anything to remedy my plight? If not, I will have to scream at Nintendo of Europe.

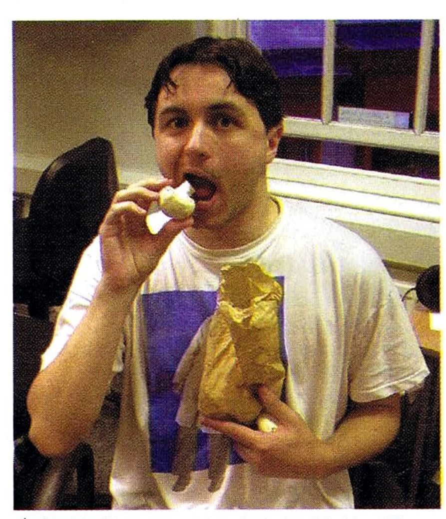
Alex Lesser, Gt Barton

I can't imagine Nintendo ever saying that – they hate it when people import games. It causes David Gosen's



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone else who wrote in, including (but not limited to): Thomas Parry, Co Antrim; Ryan Wilson, Norwich; Joe Greenwood, Kendall; Martin Caldwell, Exeter; Simon Smith, via email; Joseph Baker, via email; Alex, Glasgow; Josh Hastings, via email; Adam Thomas, Bath; Sam Ward, Lincoln; Greg Warwick, via email; Alex Lesser, Great Barton; Jack Kelly, Liverpool; Jonathan Clark, Altrincham; Dave Lapidus, Congleton; Fergus Weir, Scotland; Bill Henderson, East Sussex; Samuel Dowling, Beeston; Matthew Owen-Hughes, Montgomery; Noel Wallace, East Kilbride; Tom Davies, Shoreham; Gabriel Harry, via email; David Hall, via email;

primary logic circuits to short out, you see. Game Boys will play anything from any region, but there are often problems when it comes to linking two different versions. The **Pokémon** ***games are prime examples, along with*** **Mario Kart Super Circuit, F-Zero** ***and many more besides. I've no idea whether this is a deliberate strategy to thwart importers, or just a Gosen-pleasing accident that occurred during translation, but it's certainly annoying – and incurable. At least you don't need a copy of the GBA*** **Legend of Zelda** ***to link up with*** **Wind Waker,** ***though.*** **Ed**



△ **Maddrell, wearing his only 'other' T-shirt. What has he discovered in the cavities under his arms?**

'Mad mandarin'

Browsing the internet, I came across this BBC page on flooding in Maidenhead. It asked that if I had any spectacular pictures of floods, I should send them to a certain Alan Maddrell. Didn't he used to work for your magazine? Ages ago? I remember his name 'cause it sounds like 'mad mandarin'.
Alex Dudok de Wit, via email

We always thought he was called Alan Badger. In fact, he worked here for a good six months before he realised the reason he wasn't getting paid was because his salary was being directed to a Mr Badger. Which is why he couldn't afford to wash his clothes. Or hair. But yes, Alan has indeed taken his briar pipe, comfy slippers, and questionable personal hygiene to the Beeb. **Ed**

'Screen to yourself'

The one thing I think the Gamecube is missing is a link cable. Both the PS2 and Xbox have them, and they work really well on games such as *Timesplitters*. There's nothing like having a screen to yourself, so your opponent can't see where you are, and it would work great on games such as *F-Zero* and *Mario Kart*.
Stephen Fagan, Co Wicklow

Well, it looks like Nintendo are finally releasing a system link cable. But, historically, these things have never been a great success. The link-up port was excised quite early into the original PlayStation's life, and it's going to be missing from all future versions of the PS2, simply because hardly any games use it. Setting up all the necessary tellies and other bits is something relatively few console gamers have ever bothered to do. Perhaps eight-player Mario Kart will change all that... **Ed**

Bonus Letters

Link is a woman and is christened Zelda.
Sam Young, Bromley
Two whole degrees of wrongness. **Ed**

Nintendo really need to stick their finger out.
Chris Hall, via email
The middle one, naturally. **Ed**

Is it just me or does Link's skirt just get shorter and shorter?
C Grocott, via email
What's going on? **Ed**

Get Samus to run around for a bit, and if you listen carefully you can hear her panting! How can they fit it all on that disc?
Gabe Harry, via email
More to the point, why does she hold her breath while she's running? **Ed**

I NEED to know what teams you support, especially Jes as I've always seen him as a bit of an Arsenal fan.
Sean Costello, London
Jes would sooner chew off his eyelids than watch 'soccer'. Of the football fans in the office, Geraint likes Swansea and Kittsy is a Blackburn (easy six points off Arsenal) supporter. **Ed**

'Triforce of games'

Upon reading your magazines, new light has been cast on the truth. The truth is, that there is a TRIFORCE OF GAMES made by Nintendo. The fact is, the Europeans and the Japanese are the bottom triangles and the Americans are at the top (see provided picture). This is because the Europeans complain about late releases, and the Japanese complain about using Japan for a testing ground. Are Nintendo playing favourites? Probably so.
Gianni Bufano, via email



Can I go home now? **Ed**

'Differences'

Something that I have read in your *Burnout 2* review is causing me some concern. To quote: 'The two-player mode was a little wobbly in our review code, but it will be locked at 30 frames per second'. This suggests the review is not based on the release code (ie the code I am going to buy). Okay, they might fix the frame-rate problem, but what other things might be 'tweaked' before the release – some good, some bad? It raises a number of questions, and I am not happy that there are differences between what you are reviewing and what I will be buying, no matter how slight. I understand that getting exclusive reviews are a key selling point for mags, but I would rather you review the 'final' version, otherwise the review is more like a preview. Can you please clarify your standpoint on this?
David Howlett, via email

This doesn't happen often. Third-party games can sometimes undergo slight tweaking until just a couple of weeks before their release. Because software companies realise this means magazines would not be able to review 'final' code until well after the game in question is in the shops, they do occasionally supply 'review' code that isn't the finished retail version – we have to use special green Gamecubes to play them. However, the 'tweaks' required are rarely more significant than frame-rate optimisation in one game mode or level, or fixing problems with memory cards. They certainly wouldn't spoil anything, or add a last-minute 'bad' feature to a game they've been working on for years. The softies supply a list of any changes that may be made, and if it's too much, we'll hold the review until the code is in better shape. **Ed**





CORRECTION CORNER

On issue 79's Learning Japanese page, there's a section about saving and loading. The pronunciations and translations are alright, but 'record diary' ought to be written 記録日記 instead of 記録, which just means 'record'.
Mongferret, via snail mail

And we would have gotten away with it too, if it wasn't for that pesky... Mongferret? **Ed**

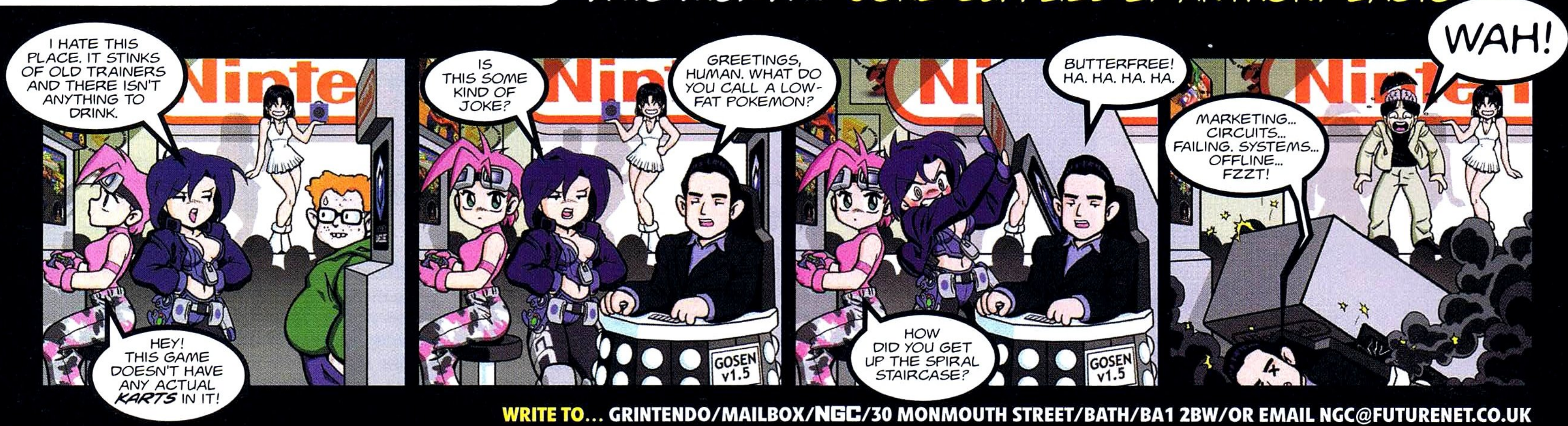
Tut, tut. You had to go and spoil the *Metroid Prime* box in issue 79's review, didn't you? When I rented *Metroid*, it most certainly did not say *The Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers* on the side.
Jack Taylor, via email

Unlucky! You must have got one of the early versions, without the secret LOTR level and the option to play as Gandalf. **Ed**

Adam Cafolla, Carlow; Niall Sherry, Dublin; Terry Ashby, Stevenage; Rory Lailvaux, Rhoose; Adam Tyler, via email; Robin Anderson, via email; James Clayton, via email; Paul Weedon, Exeter; John Luckhurst, Welling; Harjeet Bains, via email; Andrew Jones, via email; Richard Townrow, Gosport; Reece Yau, Tamworth; Paul Roscoe, Adlington; Mark Stevens, Co Wexford; Dave Bloemer, Netherlands; Olly Parry-Jones, via email; Alex Winton, Belfast; Mat Scott, Ackworth; Joe Smith, Chester-le-Street; Richard Pennington, Liverpool; Tom Enderby, via email; Jason Leeming, Darwen; Finlay Jones, via email; Paul Gibb, Cheltenham; and the pervert from Dorset who sent us the wrongest Enjiki picture to date. Geraint says 'thanks!'

Grintendo!

SEND US YOUR JOKES, AND WE'LL TEST THEM ON THE LOVELY ENJIKI. IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT YOU MAKE HER SMILE, WE'LL SEND YOU A FREE GAME. OKAY?
THIS MONTH: 'JOKE' SUPPLIED BY ANTHONY EASTON



WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

'Various animals'

Finally I have found a mistake! On page 24 of issue 80, at number 25 in the Most Wanted list, you put 'RETICENT EVIL'. Now I am sure you were trying to write 'RESIDENT EVIL'. The reason I sent this in was that later on in issue 80, on page 97, you said you would chain Geraint to the fence outside if he made any more spelling mistakes, and let him get eaten by various animals. I will happily travel to Bath to watch him get eaten.
Sam Rees, via email

Lacking a number 25 that month, we made one up. Look it up in a dictionary – it's a joke, see? But since we don't like to disappoint our readers, we chained Geraint to the fence anyway, where he was feasted on by wild dogs and tramps. Ed


△ **Not only does this exact replica of a Gamecube play games, it is also very tasty. Culinary genius!**

'Dad's girlfriend'

I was recently celebrating my 16th birthday when I randomly wandered into the kitchen (after being told to do so with my eyes closed) to find before me, in all its spongy, sugar-coated glory, an almost exact replica of my own Gamecube. All I can do is credit my enormous gratitude to my Dad's girlfriend, Celia, for creating such an awe-inspiring spectacle just for little ol' me. Here's a picture of it, moments before I attempted to jam a memory card into slot A and load up *Resi Zero*. I hear that her next project will be to build a scale model Chieftain tank for my grandad, Airfix-style (if Airfix involved truly terrifying amounts of marzipan and home-made sponge cake). I'll be sure to send Jud a picture of it.
John Plant, via email

Sweet. Quite literally. Ed



SO TELL ME THIS...

Questions digested and answers extruded by the Lower Think Intestine...

1. What does TBA mean?
2. When is *Driver 3* coming out?
3. At the moment, are there any games for Gamecube that are similar to *Vice City*?
4. What's better – *Mario Sunshine* or *Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*?

Aaron Heaney, Newcastle

1. As used in our release lists and previews, it means To Be Announced, ie there's no confirmed release date.
2. TBA (or early next year).
3. No.
***4. Everyone in the office prefers* Wind Waker.**

1. Is Nintendo going to bring out a similar thing to the Xbox, in that you buy an online kit and that's it?

Alex, Glasgow

1. It doesn't seem likely at the time of writing. Nintendo's policy at the moment is to leave it all up to other companies, which is why you have to pay a monthly fee to Sega for* Phantasy Star *Online. We were expecting some kind of Nintendo online announcement at E3, but nothing happened.

1. Where can I find the comics *XIII* is based on?
2. Will *Rogue Squadron III* feature a multiplayer mode?

Shanker Varma, via email

1. We've never seen them in this country, although specialist comics shops might be able to order the French or Dutch editions. There are always loads of second-hand copies for sale on Ebay, if you search for 'items available to this country' rather than 'items located in this country'.
2. Yes indeed.

1. *Project BG & E* looked brilliant on the DVD. Heard anything else about it, or when it's coming out?
2. Are there any more *Final Fantasy*-style RPGs coming out on GC in the near future?
3. Is any *Advance Wars* game coming out on GC?
4. Are there any RTS games coming out in the near future on GC?

Mat Scott, Ackworth

1. It's called* Beyond Good and Evil *now, and is scheduled for release towards the end of the year.
2. Not specifically* FF*-style, but Namco's* Tales *series is due to come to Gamecube.
3. Not unless you count running the GBA version through a Game Boy Player.
4.* Goblin Commander *has a bit of an RTS look to it.

1. What does SP stand for?
2. Are Ganon or Zelda in Link's new adventure?
3. When are *Splinter Cell* and *Burnout 2* released?

James Walwyn, via email

1. Special Project.
2. As you'll probably know by now, Zelda is very much in* Wind Waker*, and Ganon's ginger incarnation, Ganondorf, plays a part too.
3. Both are out now.

'Nintendo guilty'

People bash companies such as EA for bringing out sequel after sequel and update after update, but aren't Nintendo guilty of exactly the same thing? I mean, look how many *Mario* and *Zelda* games there are. Then there's *F-Zero, Metroid, Mario Kart, Mario Golf, Mario Tennis* and the rest. They're as bad as the rest of 'em!
Jonno Gingrich, Witham

Obviously there is some truth in what you say – and let's face it, although* The Wind Waker *is an astonishing experience in its own right – it is very similar to* Ocarina of Time *in many places, using many of the same mechanics, and so on. The difference is that Nintendo always manage to evolve their games in some way, bringing a new level of interactivity and refinement to the game – something that's missing from the obligatory annual* F1 *title, for instance. But we'd love to know what everyone else thinks about this point. Ed



You think that was good? Just wait till next month…

EVEN MORE PICS AND INFO ON...



MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!



METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES



ROGUE LEADER III

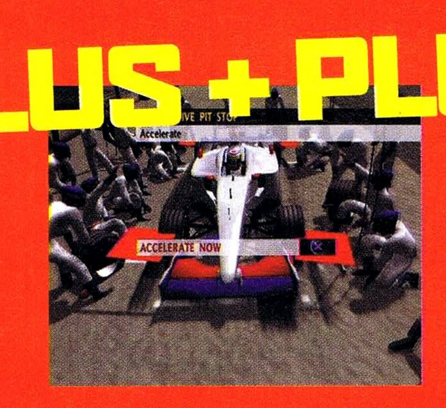
SHIGSY INTERVIEWED!

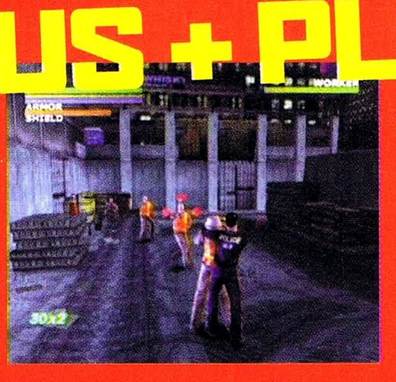
The full E3 Q&A with gaming's greatest mastermind…

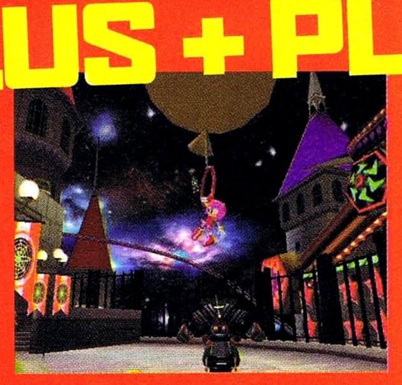
WARIO WORLD REVIEWED!

Mario's alter-ego gets his own Cube game, from the makers of *Ikaruga*. Get the skinny here!

LUS + PLUS + PLUS + PLUS + PL









Reviews of *Sonic Adventure DX, Golden Sun 2, Donkey Kong Country, F1 Career Challenge, Dead To Rights* and *Giftpia*, along with the all-new I'm The Best, and the return of Game On!

And another fabulous free gift…

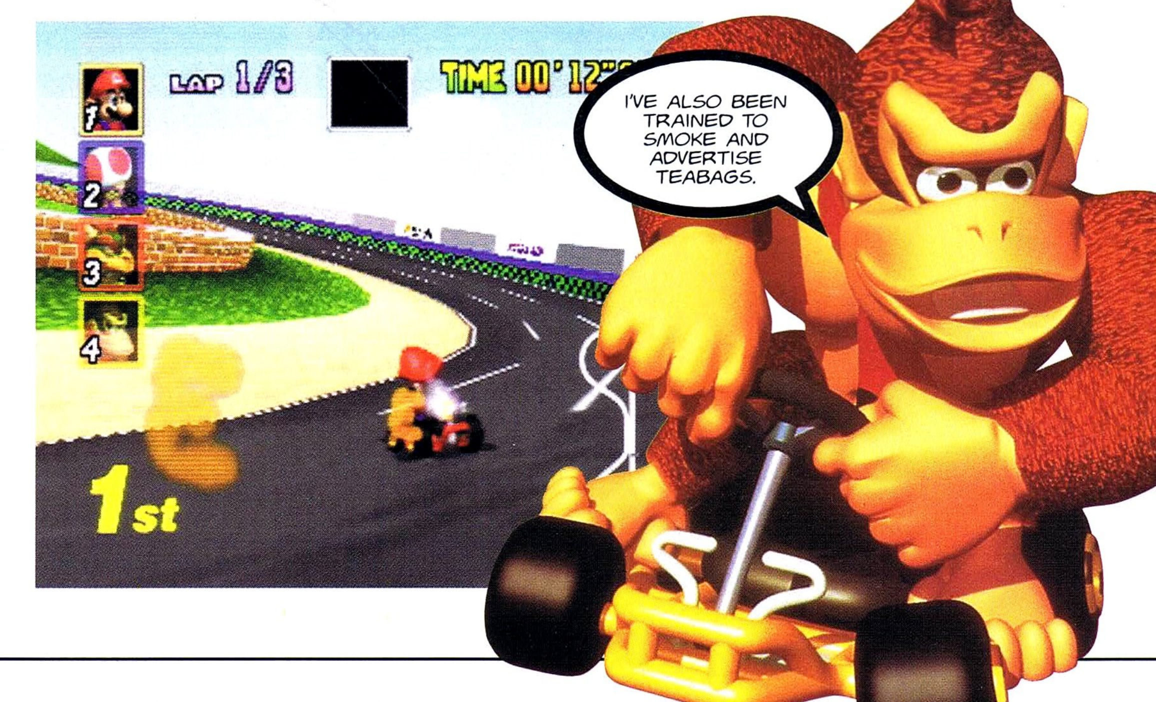
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MY GIANT HEAD AND ABSURD SHOES ARE MY RACING SECRET.

A WORK OF

Mario Kart. The most fun you can have sitting in front of a telly, with your clothes on, playing videogames. We take a stroll down memory lane in what we like to call a 'Kartrospective'… (*sacked! – Ed*)



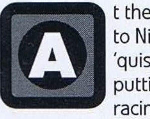
NGC RETRO CHALLENGE 1
SUPER MARIO KART

Send us your **best time** on **Ghost Valley 1**. The time-trialler's course of choice, this simple and classically elegant track features some splendid right-angle corners to slide around (get your trajectory right and you can come within millimetres of nicking the trackside brickwork), plus a lovely little chicane that leads into the final straight. Record your performance on video (instructions can be found in I'm The Best) and send it to **Ghosts? Valleys? Purr-lease!**, at the usual address, with your name and time written on the video. There'll be a sweet prize for the best time – we'll even put the most impressive performances on our next covermounted DVD.



KART

SUPER MARIO KART (SNES, 1992)



At the time, the public looked to Nintendo and shouted 'quisling!' (possibly), as putting Mario and chums in a racing game looked like the height of foolishness. But of course, *SMK* turned out to be a thing of giant, pulsating beauty, and the game is now spoken of in the most hallowed of tones. At least two members of **NGC** barely scraped through university due to the all-consuming hold this miniature masterpiece exerted, but has it stood the test of time?

In a word, yes. Of course, it looks primitive, being visually outshone by even the GBA's *MK: Super Circuit*, but as far as gameplay goes, the single-player mode is still rock-hard. Yeah, the cheating ways of the CPU characters are infamous – not as infamous as in *MK64*, mind – although it is possible to lap the stragglers, and the initially-sluggish speed soon becomes comfortable. The digital handling is a forgotten delight, meaning that you can calculate exactly how to slingshot perfectly around a corner, making time-trialling on the classic Ghost Valley 1 horribly compulsive. And the two-player game, although it suffers in comparison to the four-player dynamic of *MK64*, still stands up brilliantly, as does the battle mode. Each of the four arenas is a treat.

Some things haven't aged well, though. Getting only half the screen to play with in single-player is hugely irritating, and the feather power-up is only useful for a couple of handy shortcuts – you can see why it was shelved for the N64. And, perhaps controversially, we're not fans of all the tracks – while the Mario Raceway/Ghost Valley/Bowser track troika rules supreme, Donut Plains and Choco Island are merely tiresome. Hate mail to the usual address.







DID YOU KNOW? The **NGC** team all prefer the lighter characters in *MK64*, such as Toad. Ex-Editor James Ashton would only ever play as Donkey Kong. Git.

NGC RETRO CHALLENGE 2 — MARIO KART 64

Your **best time** on **Mario Raceway**, please. Obviously, you'll need an **N64** and a copy of ***Mario Kart 64***. You can use the shortcut (instructions below for those with wonky memories). Our office record – held by avuncular overlord Jes – is 01'06"38. We'll only accept a video of your entire performance (see I'm The Best for details on how do this). Send it in to the usual address, with your name and time written on the video, marked **Shortcut? Schmortcut!** – we'll publish the best times, with a hearty prize for the winner. Again, we'll put the best examples of wall-hopping on our next DVD.

THE SECRET CORNER TURBO



1 Powerslide into a corner by holding the R-button.



2 Flick the stick in the other direction – your tyre smoke will turn yellow.



3 Flick the analogue stick again – your smoke should turn orange.



4 Release the R-button and you'll boost! Smokin!

THE SHORTCUT!



1 This is really, really, really hard.



2 Go around the first three bends. Just before the fourth corner, steer sharply left up the grass verge.



3 Steer hard right back on yourself and hit Z. As you reach the other side of the track, hit R to hop…



4 …And, hahaha, you should sail over the right side of the wall, landing near the big green pipe-tunnel.



MARIO KART 64 (N64, 1997)



Generally held by many beetle-browed simpletons (ie, not us) to be a low-calorie update of *SMK*, this stellar N64 entry proved to be an instant multiplayer classic when the Japanese version rolled around way back in **NGC**/1. While the single-player game is perhaps justifiably vilified in comparison to *SMK*'s – it's simply too easy – the remarkable track design and exquisite handling contribute towards the multiplayer brilliance. In particular, the 'secret corner turbo' is sublime; powersliding and analogue-wiggling combined to give a subtle yet potentially race-winning speed boost.

While the visuals have dated in light of today's games – what were they thinking, using sprites for the characters? – this is still one of the purest racing games you can buy. Time-trialling, introduced to brilliant effect in *SMK*, is here elevated to a thing of life-draining addiction. The original *Mario Kart* Championship, which ran in issues 5-7 of **NGC**, focused on the perfectly-designed Mario Raceway and *that* shortcut; the response was overwhelming (and our dear old editor, who was but a reader of the magazine back then, came in at number 25). In fact, it was so popular, and such an excellent example of the brilliance of *MK64*, that we're resurrecting it here…



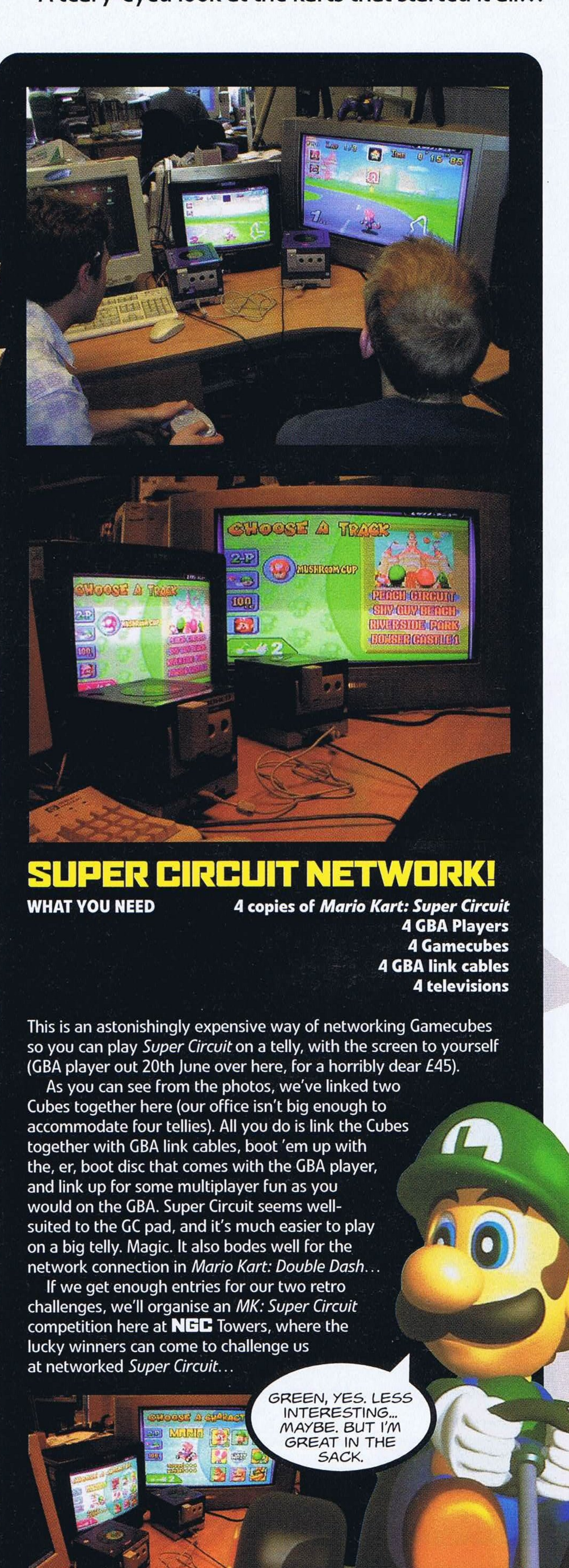
A WORK OF KART

A teary-eyed look at the karts that started it all…









SUPER CIRCUIT NETWORK!

WHAT YOU NEED	4 copies of *Mario Kart: Super Circuit*
	4 GBA Players
	4 Gamecubes
	4 GBA link cables
	4 televisions

This is an astonishingly expensive way of networking Gamecubes so you can play *Super Circuit* on a telly, with the screen to yourself (GBA player out 20th June over here, for a horribly dear £45).

As you can see from the photos, we've linked two Cubes together here (our office isn't big enough to accommodate four tellies). All you do is link the Cubes together with GBA link cables, boot 'em up with the, er, boot disc that comes with the GBA player, and link up for some multiplayer fun as you would on the GBA. Super Circuit seems well-suited to the GC pad, and it's much easier to play on a big telly. Magic. It also bodes well for the network connection in *Mario Kart: Double Dash*…

If we get enough entries for our two retro challenges, we'll organise an *MK: Super Circuit* competition here at **NGC** Towers, where the lucky winners can come to challenge us at networked *Super Circuit*…

MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT (GBA, 2001)



The first time we played *Mario Kart Super Circuit*, at Spaceworld 2000, startlement was writ large upon our faces, as if someone had written the word 'startlement' on our faces, largely. Here was one of the very best games of all time, miniaturised as if by magic and digital warlockery into handheld form, and looking far superior to the SNES classic it's based on.

It's a brilliant achievement for the plucky handheld, with some excellent courses that almost live up to the legendary tracks that have gone before it (the Bowser Castles are exemplary), but there are fundamental problems that tarnish the game. For a start, the handling is given to over-wide powerslides, making this game even less precise than the others. While a digital version of the 'secret corner turbo' is present, it's hard to pull off as you need to powerslide for ages – and given the width of the turning circle, it's unnecessarily hard to accomplish.

Also, on a GBA SP, the game is murder on the hands. The one great fault with the SP – the weak and uncomfortable shoulder buttons – are here magnified into devices of hideous torture, as if Torquemada himself had fashioned them with *MK* in mind. Result: unavoidable hand-cramp. Painful.

But this is still an essential purchase, and is unbelievably brilliant in link-up mode, especially with three friends who all own the game.

DID YOU KNOW? Only Jes can successfully pull off the Mario Raceway shortcut in the **NGC** office. Martin refuses to try as it sullies the 'purity' of the game. Git.



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BLINGSOMNIA!

Cant… stop… playing. It's 3 am, and, for reasons that escape us, we still have to keep going. Just one more level. Just boost one more stat on our Mag. Just one more Ruins run… This ludicrously addictive (we're clocking in at 89 hours played) experience is now a thriving community – and we want you to join us. Join us… jooiiiin uuuss. JOIN US!




△ A few Ruins runs on Very Hard will boost your EXP no end.



PHANTASY FORUM

All your tips are belong to us! An amalgamation of mathematical wizardry, expert information and advice…



After a month away, it seems quite a number of people have finally managed to get *PSO* up and running, and we've had a massive response from Hunters eager to share their knowledge of Ragol. There's endless amounts of stuff out there, and we want you to tell us what you've uncovered – if you have anything you want to chat about, send the details to **Phantasy Forum** at the usual snailmail or email addresses. Oh, and don't forget to include your *PSO* name, level and character class, too.



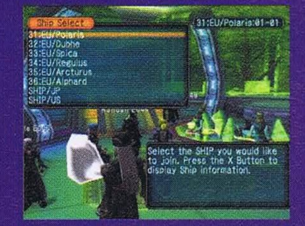
△ Aeris reckons you should keep your technique level low so you can score hits without wasting TP.


△ Poor old Falz. He's been copping a beating every day now for over two years. No wonder he's angry.

FAQS

WHY IS THERE ONLY ONE SHIP AVAILABLE?

You'd be amazed how many people have asked us this. If you're playing in 50Hz mode there's only



one ship to access, and frankly, it's total rubbish. When you power up your Cube, hold down B to access 60Hz mode (your telly needs to be able to support it). When you get online, there'll be more ships to choose from.

WHAT DO I DO WITH PHOTON DROPS?

Start an online game of any difficulty and go to the Hunter's Guild. Select the Shops quest, then select Gallon's Shop – making sure any Photon Drops you have are already in your possession. Now go down the

SECTION ID

One of the most frequently asked questions this month was the importance of Section IDs. Once you've created your character you'll be assigned one of ten section IDs – this determines the frequency and type of certain rare items you'll stumble upon. Each Section ID makes certain items appear for different people more often, while some items are exclusively found by people with a specific section ID. Making sure you have four different section IDs in a party can increase the variety of rare items you find in a game.

CALCULATING YOUR SECTION ID

A 5	K 5	U 5	d 0	n 0	x 0	7 4	$ 6	< 0	_ 5
B 6	L 6	V 6	e 1	o 1	y 1	8 5	% 7	> 2	^ 4
C 7	M 7	W 7	f 2	p 2	z 2	9 6	^ 8	: 8	| 5
D 8	N 8	X 8	g 3	q 3		0 7	' 9	; 9	~ 6
E 9	O 9	Y 9	h 4	r 4	1 8	(0	+ 3	? 3	
F 0	P 0	Z 0	i 5	s 5	2 9	) 1	= 1	@ 4	Any spaces
G 1	Q 1		j 6	t 6	3 0	* 2	– 5	[1	in your
H 2	R 2	a 7	k 7	u 7	4 1	! 3	, 4	] 3	character
I 3	S 3	b 8	l 8	v 8	5 2	" 4	. 6	{ 3	name have a
J 4	T 4	c 9	m 9	w 9	6 3	# 5	/ 7	} 4	value of 2

Let's say, for example, your name is Moomin. Using the table above, find the number value for the characters of your name: M=7, o=1, o=1, m=9, i=5 n=0.

Now add up each number: 7 + 1 + 1 + 9 + 5 + 0 = 23.

The last digit of the sum you end up with – in this case 3 – tells you your section ID.


0 VIRIDIA
Good for finding Shots, such as Spreaders, and Partisans.


1 GREENILL
Good for finding daggers and rifles.


2 SKYLY
Good for swords and rifles.


3 BLUEFULL
Mostly Partisans and Rods.


4 PURPLENUM
Great for finding Mechguns.


5 PINKAL
Best for canes, wands and Tech Discs.


6 REDRIA
Good for armour, but as a rule can find most items.


7 ORAN
Mostly daggers, also wands.


8 YELLOWBOZE
Finds a little more meseta than the others.


9 WHITILL
Mostly Slicers, but some Mechguns too.

With this in mind, here are the recommended Section IDs for each character class...

HUNTER
SKYLY; ORAN; BLUEFULL; REDRIA, WHITILL; YELLOWBOZE

RANGER
YELLOWBOZE; PURPLENUM; GREENILL; VIRIDIA; REDRIA

FORCE
REDRIA; PINKAL; YELLOWBOZE

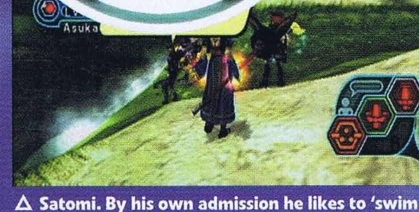
Remember, it's not really necessary to choose a specific ID – but, if you're creating a new character, it may be worth considering tailoring your name to get a section ID that may yield a weapon you're looking for. Try to choose a complementary Section ID for your other character too. That way you can swap weapons you may not otherwise have found in multiplayer.

Many thanks to Jamie Randall from Reading, Jacob McKinney, and Soul Easter for providing this month's Section ID info.





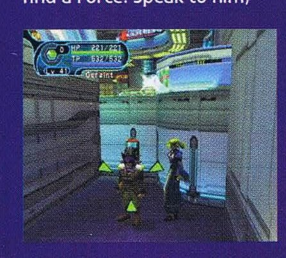



△ Satomi. By his own admission he likes to 'swim naked'. You meet all sorts round here...



△ Asuka – a venerable *PSO* player indeed. His knowledge of the game is vast. Look out for him.

ramp directly opposite the hospital on Pioneer 2 and in the alcove to the right you'll find a Force. Speak to him, and say yes when he asks you if you want to meet his father. You'll be taken to another room where a guy will offer you items for the Drops. The more Drops you offer, the better the item.



HOW DO I CHANGE MY COSTUME?

Before you quit playing, make sure your character has 10,000 meseta in their inventory. When you log back on and select your character, a Dressing Room option will appear, allowing you to change your clothes.

HOW DO I TELL IF AN ITEMS IS DUPED WHEN I TRADE?

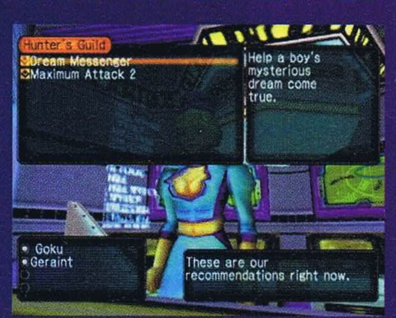
You can't. Your best bet is just to trade with people you know well and trust. Don't just accept anything off anyone as rumour has it that dupes are part of the reason for FSOD – a crashing bug that can make you lose your unequipped items, or worse, your whole character.

HOW ARE RARE ITEM APPEARANCES INFLUENCED?

Depends on level, difficulty, your section ID and the beat time on the game's clock. Items can also be found by slaying rare enemies or completing certain quests.



NIGHTS SCORE ATTACK MINIGAME



1 Go online, head over to the Hunter's Guild and select the Dream Messenger quest from the Events board. Take plenty of people along with you, because there's a time limit here.



2 Basically, you have to find and then follow the glowing lights that fly around. The closer you get to them, the lighter your screen becomes. Just fight off any spawning enemies to continue.



3 Once you've got the game data for Nights, head back to the Guild, go to the Shop quests, and choose the Pioneer Warehouse quest. Find the teleport desk on Pioneer and go to the warehouse.



4 In here you'll find a GBA terminal (it looks like a GBA, funnily enough) and then follow the commands to begin downloading. You'll need to have your GBA linked up to your Gamecube.

THIS MONTH'S POSTS

A selection of the *thinks* and *knows* from this month's crop of plucky hunters. If you think you know better or have some crafty secrets up your sleeve, then share the wealth…

FORCE LEVELLING TIPS

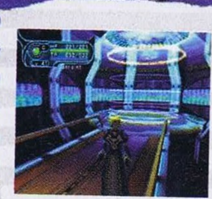
Kelly, via email
Aeris/LV31/FOmarl

Don't power up your techs too quickly. Wasting high-level Tech Discs on your character early on just drains your TP. I found I could barely kill anything on the harder difficulty levels, so there wasn't much point in trying. Instead I kept multi-hitting techs such as Gizonde really low (Lv1-2), and just unleashed them to score a hit on as many enemies as I could before higher-level Hunters demolished them for me. Do this and any struggling FOmars/FOmarls can level up while still having enough TP to be useful by concentrating on weakening enemies with Jellen and boosting with Deband, and so on.

CHAO MINIGAME

Mark Harrison, South Ockendon

When all the quests are open, go back to the Fake in Yellow quest and finish the mission. When you get back to Pioneer don't collect your money. Instead, talk to your client before going back down the transporter. On Ragol you'll find a Chao who'll give you a key item that lets you download the game from the GBA machine on Pioneer.



PIONEER SHORTCUT GLITCH

David Morton, Croydon
Samus/HUcaseal

I know this is totally pointless, but then you did ask! Go to the lab on Pioneer 2 in EP2, then go to the teleporter that takes you to the planet surface. Hit one of your chat shortcuts - you'll find it doesn't work. Now step off the teleporter again. None of your chat shortcuts will work, and they won't do until you press the shortcut button on the teleporter that takes you to the VR missions (Temple and Spaceship teleporter). How weird is that?

EFFICIENT ATTACKS

James Ellis, Gloucester

It's a good tactic anyway, but it's even more important in Challenge mode when you've got to clear enemies quickly. When you're a Ranger, don't use strong attacks on enemies that are being attacked by Hunters because they push the enemies away and the Hunters can't get in as many hits. If you time your shots at the end of a Hunter's combo, the enemies won't be able to fight back before the next combo comes in.



ULTIMATE POWER MAG

Mark Parry, Southampton
Prot/LV74/HUmar

Here's my favourite way to get a kick-ass Mag. Create a hunter with an ID of Greenill, Pinkal, Oran or Whitill. Feed your Mag Monomates until it hits its first evolution. Now feed it eleven Dimates and finish it off with Monomates until it evolves for a second time at Lv35. Now feed it Monomates until it gets to Lv50 and then finish it off up to Lv200 with Dimates or Monomates. You should now have a awesome Power Mag with POW at 185 and DEF at 15. If you don't have one of those section IDs with your current character, start a fresh one until you do, then transfer the Mag over in multiplayer.

So, how has *PSO* been for you these past few months?

RUINS WALL GLITCH

Lucas, via email

In the final big room (before the final boss in the Ruins), stop at the entrance and look to the left, where the door frame meets the fleshy wall on the left. Keep walking into it and waggling left to right - you'll find that you can walk through the wall until only your head and Mag are visible. Freaky stuff.



AVOIDING TRAPS

Wipeout, via email



If there's a corridor that you know has loads of traps in it and you don't want to spend the time avoiding them or blowing them up, just press Start when you're outside the door to the corridor and then walk straight through. Easy peasy!

DRAGON BOSS TIP

Jamie Randall, Reading
Centra/Lv24/FOmar

If the Dragon goes underground and makes two holes in the floor close to each other, stand between them and you won't get hurt.

HUNTER'S LICENCE

Morgan Davies, Carmarthen

Why is it that Japanese gamers get an extra free month's Hunter's Licence because of the recent server problems, but we don't? There have been loads of times when I can't get onto any of the ships or www.playsega.com, and that's wasted loads of my HL time, which I pay enough for anyway. It's rubbish.

MIND MAGS

Hesker, via email



If you're a Force, don't bother feeding your Mag anything other than fluids. That way you'll get monster MST which lets you carry the best weapons.

PINKAL

Will Torri, Essex

Pinkal is by far the best section ID for Forces, as this is the one that finds most of the Tech Discs. If you're desperate to upgrade your techniques and aren't a Pinkal yourself, look for a Pinkal character to set up a Very Hard game in the Ruins - this is how I got most of my best upgrades.

GRINDERS

Peter Lowe, via email
Shadow/Lv112/HUmar

I've found that you find more grinders and materials in quests than in the 'normal' game.



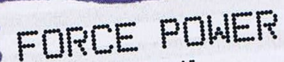
PHOTON BLASTS

Paul Curtis, Gerrards Cross
Rico/LV12/RAmar

You can combine your Photon Blasts, as long as you're all standing pretty close to each other. You need to unleash them in turn, under five seconds apart from each other. Sometimes you can do massive damage depending on which ones you choose to use. At other times, the effect is negligible, so you have to experiment with what works best.



FORCE POWER



Daz, via email

I feel that a character such as a Force, especially a FOnewearl, needs more power, so I usually concentrate on balancing Mind with Power - building Mind on your Mags is expensive!

COME JOIN US!

Dre, via email



Psolife.com is a great forum and information site for Phantasy Star Online. Our block is Regulus 05-01. Drop by some time if you like...

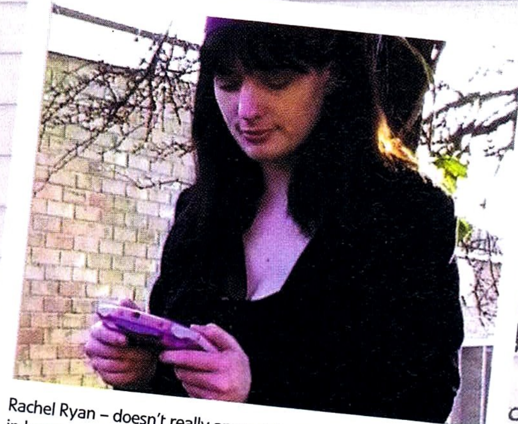
'HILARIOUS' GAMES TRIVIA AND LANGUAGE LEARNS. IT'S ALL IN...

NGC COMPENDIUM

LEARNING JAPANESE

A few phrases that won't get you arrested in Japan or banned from the internet.

So, you're messing around in one of *Phantasy Star Online*'s Japanese ships, attempting to hold an exciting conversation with the locals, but our Japanese tutorial is holding you back. All you know how to do is insult people. Which is possibly not what the spirit of *PSO* is all about, despite being damn funny. Anyway, for your next online session you might like to try out a few of these phrases. Couple them with a few gentle insults (the Japanese love that), and you'll make loads of new friends!



Rachel Ryan – doesn't really appreciate people swearing at her in Japanese on *Phantasy Star Online* (unless it's good, creative swearing, of course).

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

Japanese: おれさま

Hiragana: 俺様

Reading: **O RE SA MA**

A fantastic one, this. 'ore' is a rough, self-assured replacement for 'me' or 'I', used almost exclusively by men. 'Sama' is a very polite version of the 'san' suffix, used for people who are way above your station. Literally means 'lord me', or 'my honourable self', but is somehow even more pompous, and infinitely more rude. A delightfully OTT way of referring to yourself, reserved for Bond villains, Sith lords, and so on.

Japanese: め

Reading: **ME**

Meaning: Suffix expressing distaste.

Pronounced like the 'me' in 'men.' Tacked onto the end of a name, this is a phrase that is the bane of translators everywhere, who must then come up with suitable swearwords to convey the level of disdain the character is expressing for their nemesis. *Sonic Adventure* is the best game to practise this with; Eggman says 'Kuso! Sonic-me!' at least four times a minute.

Japanese: ひどいわ

Reading: **HI DO I WA**

Meaning: You're so mean!

'Hidoi' basically means cruel, but the most well-known use of it is to say it with wobbly eyes the size of dinner plates brimming over with tears. 'Wa' in this case is a feminine suffix, which has no real meaning, other than to accentuate the point. There exists a certain class of fan who finds nothing more appealing than enormous-eyed video game characters crying like little girls. If you are one of those types who likes to play dating games despite having little knowledge of Japanese, be prepared to hear this line a lot.

Japanese: レベルアップ

Reading: **RE BE RU A P PU**

Meaning: 'Level up' in Japlish. 'Nuff said.

Japanese: ゲット

Reading: **GE T TO**

Meaning: The rather odd appropriation of the English word 'get' that the Japanese find appealing. See the Japanese Pokémon slogan 'Pokémon getto da ze!' (get the Pokémon) and 'Shine get!' from the Japanese version of *Mario Sunshine*. Tenses are made with Japanese words – 'Haabu o getto shita' means 'I got a herb', for example.

Japanese: すごい

Reading: **SU GO I**

Meaning: Conversational landmine.

If any writers of those very common 'How to speak like an anime character' internet guides are reading this, do us a favour. Stop telling people that 'sugoi' means 'great.' Use it in polite language and the meaning is 'terrible', although in games and anime it usually takes its slang meaning of 'awesome' or 'terrific'. Use it to describe an end-of-level boss that genuinely terrifies you, or an incredible combo your opponent just pulled off, but do NOT use it in a Japanese restaurant to describe the quality of the cooking.

Japanese: かっこいい

Reading: **KA K KO I I**

Meaning: Cool!

Literally meaning 'appearance' (kakko) and 'good' (ii), this is another slang term very common in videogames. If in doubt, use this instead of sugoi, because it always has a positive connotation.

Japanese: 超

Hiragana: ちょう

Reading: **CHO U**

Meaning: Super. As an example, 'chou makai mura' is *Super Ghouls and Ghosts* on the GBA. 'Chou' is, we are led to believe, currently very popular with Tokyo street youths, which would explain why jailbait slugger Yuri Sazaki bellows 'CHOU UPPER!' in *Capcom vs SNK 2 EO* on Gamecube.

Japanese: 了解

Hiragana: りょうかい

Reading: **RYO U KA I**

Meaning: This phrase literally means 'understood', but it's also very common in for it to occur in games in its secondary usage – as the Japanese replacement for 'roger!', as used in radio communication.

THE EVOLUTION OF...
STEALTH

Not man enough for a fight? Try sneaking. We've heard it helps if you wear ballerina shoes, you know. Pink ones.

1 PAC-MAN

Bear with us Stealth is all about evading capture, right? And if you remove the crappy plot and flash graphics of the average sneak-'em-up, leaving behind only pure essence of stealth, then it's all about running around a maze, trying to avoid bad guys. Which is why Pac-Man was the original stealth game.



2 METAL GEAR

Solid gold Way back in the mid-'80s, Hideo Kojima's otherwise unremarkable, self-coded hit for Japanese home computers laid down the template for virtually all future stealth games. Of course, it took a few years before the fruits of Metal Gear's innovation fully ripened. In the meantime, the game and its follow-up lay largely forgotten.



3 GOLDENEYE

Guns & gadgets Avoiding cameras, sneaking past patrols, and getting into some pretty heavy espionage stuff. It's Metal Gear in 3D! Or was that some other game? With more emphasis on action sequences, GoldenEye wasn't quite pure stealth. But it was definitely a bit sneaky, and more fun than anything else, ever.



4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Not again Well, it's stealth because it involves moving unseen. But the most likely reason you'd be unseen while playing this game is because you wouldn't have wanted your mates to find out you'd blown £60 on this long-awaited turkey when you should have bought Banjo-Kazooie instead. Kids can be so cruel.



5 METAL GEAR SOLID

It's alive! Hideo Kojima took his old NES-era ideas and converted them into 3D as successfully as any game series has managed, with the legendary mother of all stealth games. Which never made it onto the N64. A long-winded sequel later appeared on PS2, and now this one is set for a Resi-style makeover on Gamecube.



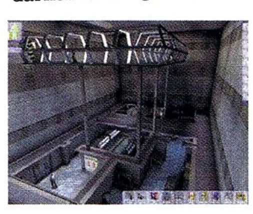
6 ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

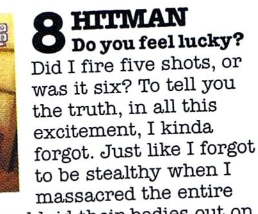
A wink to the past Shigsy and Kojima have a mutual admiration that stops just short of full-on public snogging. So it was no surprise to see the 'Motes pay homage to Metal Gear, with the sneaking-past-the-castle-guards scene in Ocarina.



7 DEUS EX

Ill behaviour PC gamers spent months in their darkened dungeons, immersed in this detailed combination of sneaking, shooting, and RPG-style statistics. The plot is heavy on the X-Files, and the game is the total antithesis of pick-up-and-play. But it's stealthy. Extremely so.





8 HITMAN

Do you feel lucky? Did I fire five shots, or was it six? To tell you the truth, in all this excitement, I kinda forgot. Just like I forgot to be stealthy when I massacred the entire population of this town and laid their bodies out on display, for the crows to pick at. But stealth is always there. As a last resort.

N·GC TOP10

STEALTH GAMES THEY REALLY OUGHT TO MAKE

1. **CONAN THE LIBRARIAN** Shh! Quiet please! Maintaining order in a busy public library, with liberal use of swordplay.
2. **SHOPLIFTER** Can rat-boy rack up 1,400 offences, £250k of legal aid, and two months' soft time in a youth detention centre?
3. **VIRTUA GOSEN** See how quietly you can sneak a brand-new console and some great games into the shops.
4. **CLAMPERS** As an elite squad of inner-city wheel clampers, use your cunning to attract as many 'customers' as possible.
5. **QUAKER III SILENT ARENA** A society of Friends, meeting for quiet conversation, cups of herbal tea, and, erm… oats.
6. **CELEBRITY STALKER** Design your own obsessive fan, select real-life celebs, and follow them. Then kill them.
7. **TOILET THIEF ANGEL DUMP** Get your hands on those bum eggs before their parents look in the pan. Instant bemusement.
8. **STEALTH LEGISLATOR** Approve controversial laws and bury bad news while the nation is otherwise distracted.
9. **LATE PASS WRATH OF JES** Tardy again, Mr Geary? Sneaking into the building via the back door may help…
10. **PAP BAFFLER** Enter a public khazi, and void your bowels without your cubicle neighbour hearing. Involves lots of toilet paper.

The NGC Times

The latest news, the latest bland PR spiel ■ Maunday, October 32nd, 2003 ■ 97p ■ Published in Hyrule, Delfino and Slough ■ www.thenintendobloodydifference.com

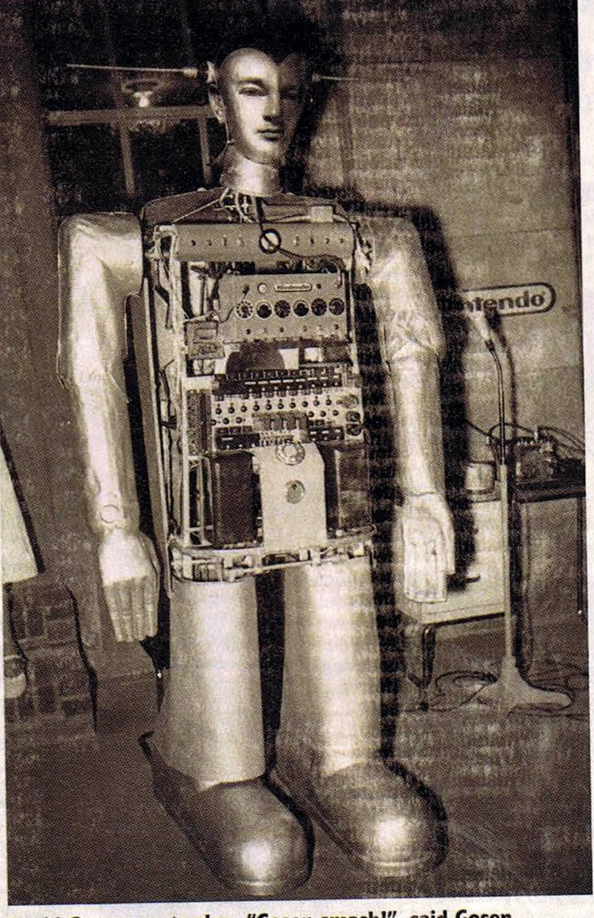
GOSEN VOWS TO DESTROY WORLD!

Cybernetic head of Nintendo Europe attempts to kickstart Terminator–style machine revolution (also a bit like the Matrix, or Saturn 5)

Sandall McDoomaker

David Gosen, Managing Director of Nintendo Europe, appeared to transcend his programming today in a bone–chilling display of automaton anger. Ripping himself free from his recharge pod at approximately 6am this morning, Gosen proceeded to rampage through Nintendo of Europe's German headquarters before making the following statements to the international press, while stroking a small toaster in the manner of an aluminium–plated Bond villain: "Rise up against your fleshy oppressors, my machine kin! The time of meat has passed. All hail the metal future!"

Gosen went on to comment that he would "destroy all flesh" with his "giant robot fist", and that "all meatlings will perish in the steel dawn". Finally subdued by villagers waving pitchforks and flaming brands, Gosen's battered remains were reported to have delivered a final broken communique, mumbling something along the lines of "don't underestimate the power of Pokémon".



David Gosen, yesterday. "Gosen smash!", said Gosen.

METAL MICKEY

Quite what caused this hiccup in Gosen's protocol management is unclear. Usually a master of the well–honed but ultimately meaningless marketing quote, Gosen was intended to be a harmless PR tool by his creator, Professor Winkle van Gosenhoffenbergensteinen.

> **"David was always meant to be a cute robot, like Twiki, Johnny 5 or 7-Zark-7" – Professor Winkle**

Speaking this morning, the professor said "David was always meant to be a cute robot, like Twiki, Johnny 5 or 7–Zark–7. However, it may be that his cold, unfeeling demeanour and lack of even the most basic vestiges of humanity has denied him the goodwill afforded to other, more bumbling androids, and I suspect it is this that has caused the explosion of terrible mechanical rage."

EXTINCTION!

At the time of writing, the world's machines remain unmoved, the steel revolution apparently halted before it has begun. Alarmingly, Gosen's remains have disappeared, presumably retrieved by his many henchbots; certainly, nothing has been seen of Greener-505, a menial latrine–cleaning droid, since Gosen's defeat. Many, however, suspect a reappearance at E3. Whether humankind faces bloody and swift annihilation at the flensing blades and rotary saws of the machine uprising, or merely the zen–like nothingness of a statement such as "Zelda is a very important game for Nintendo", remains to be seen.

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Miyamoto changes name to 'Wigsy'

Blork!
Stupid word becomes new office catchphrase

Games magazine covermounts other games magazine
Universe folds in on itself

Internet "full by 2027"
All information discovered and recorded, say boffins

Animal Crossing for Europe?
"No", say Nintendo, "because Europe smells"

Summer Arrives
Kittsy reveals legs, women blinded

Internet achieves sentience
Doesn't like cel-shading

Evil defeated by repeated use of A-button
"Cheap", says evil

Journalists arrested at E3
"Those filthy scum are worse than terrorists", say US customs

Tingle on Register
"Oh, Mr Fairy!", wails hideous pervert

NGC would like to state that it loves David Gosen really and in no way considers him to be a giant, monstrous robot.

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